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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JUNE 1901.

Fyander's Widow.¹

BY M. E. FRANCIS (MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL),

AUTHOR OF 'YEOMAN FLEETWOOD,' 'THE DUENNA OF A GENIUS,'
'IN A NORTH-COUNTRY VILLAGE,' 'MISS ERIN,'
'A DAUGHTER OF THE SOIL,' &c.

PART II.—THE PRINCE.

CHAPTER V.

Colin, the grass was grey and wet the sod
O'er which I heard her velvet footfall come;
But heaven, where yet no pallid crescent rode,
Flowered in fire behind the bloomless plum;
There stirred no wing nor wind, the wood was dumb,
Only blown roses shook their leaves abroad
On stems more tender than an infant's thumb—
Soft leaves, soft hued, and curled like Cupid's lip—
And each dim tree shed sweetness over me,
From honey-dews that breathless boughs let slip
In the orchard by the sea.

ELINOR SWEETMAN.

'YE bain't sich very good company to-night, Richard,' remarked Mr. Sharpe, laying down his knife and fork, and gazing critically at his nephew. 'Nay, I can't say as ye be. You haven't opened your mouth since we sat down, except just to put a bit into it now and again, and not too often neither. Ye bain't eatin' nothing to speak on, an' ye haven't a word to throw to a dog. What's amiss?'

'Why—nothing,' returned Richard, rousing himself with a

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startled look from the brown study into which he had fallen. 'I suppose I am tired,' he added as an afterthought.

'Ah, very like ye be,' agreed the farmer commiseratingly. 'It just depends on what a man's used to how soon he gets knocked up. You be used to town, an' travellin', and that, and when you come back to the ploughin' it tries you a bit to start wi'. 'Tis just the other way wi' I; I'm used to the country, d'ye see, and when I do have to go to town—to Dorchester, or Weymouth, or any big place like that—Lard, I do get mortal tired! Walkin' them streets, now, and lookin' in at the shop-winders—dear heart alive, it makes me so weary as I could very nigh drop down in the middle of 'em! As for travellin'—goin' in trains an' sich-like—it do make me so stiff I can scarce lay legs to the ground when I do 'light from 'em. But I dare say you found it a hardish bit o' work turnin' up the big field yonder?'

His nephew made no response, and Isaac bawled out the question afresh.

The young man, who had been absently balancing a fork on his forefinger, started, and replied hastily that he hadn't found it at all hard—at least—yes, perhaps rather hard, but very pleasant; and he liked the work.

Isaac took a farewell pull at his pint mug, set it down, and pushed his plate away.

'Draw up to the fire, lad,' he said, 'and smoke your pipe quick, and then turn in—ye bain't fit for nothin' but bed.'

'No, no,' returned Richard hastily, as he rose, 'I could not go to bed yet—it is not much past eight. I don't think I'll sit down by the fire—I'll go out for a stroll to stretch my legs.'

'Stretch your legs!' commented his uncle indignantly. 'Ha'n't ye stretched them enough to-day already? You've a-worked hard enough for two men.'

'No remedy so good as a hair of the dog that bit you, you know,' said Richard. 'A brisk turn will take the stiffness off, and it is a lovely evening.'

'Lard, how restless these young chaps do be!' ejaculated Isaac, as he scraped his chair across the tiled floor to the hearth; 'a body mid think he'd be glad enough to set down for a bit. I'll engage he'll find it hard enough to turn out to-morrow morn.'

When Richard had proceeded a little way he paused, and drew a long breath; then, wheeling round swiftly, began to retrace his steps, brought himself to a standstill for the second time, his hands clenched, his eyes fixed; finally, crying aloud: 'I will do it—I must do it!' he turned once more, and pursued his former course,

The sun had set some time before, but the heavens were still luminous ; the rosy glow which lingered at the horizon merging into soft primrose, which in its turn melted into an exquisite ethereal green. Against this lambent background the hills and woods stood out darkly purple, while the little copses scattered here and there upon the downs, and the hedge at the further end, appeared to be almost black. Little parties of his uncle's sheep scurried out of Richard's way, a bell tinkling here and there among them ; birds flew almost into his face as he passed the groups of trees before alluded to ; when he forced his way through the hedge a trailing tendril of honeysuckle, wet with the heavy dew, flapped against his face ; every now and then a rabbit crossed his path, its passage scarcely noticeable in the dusk save for the flash of its little white tail. There must have been thyme growing on or about those downs, for its fragrance was strong in the air. Richard did not, however, pause to inhale it—it is even doubtful if he noticed it ; yet, when by-and-by entering Rosalie's fields he skirted a bank overgrown with primroses, their perfume for a moment turned him almost faint.

Here was the house at last—how quiet at this hour ! Nothing seemed to be stirring ; no one was about.

Susan appeared in answer to a somewhat tremulous knock, and informed him that her mistress was in the garden.

'I'll soon call her,' she added.

'No, no,' he returned quickly. 'I will go to her—I only want to see her for a moment.'

Who knew ? She might refuse to obey the summons ; it was best to come upon her without warning.

'Round to the left,' explained Susan ; 'the path leads you up to the gate.'

Following her directions, and passing through the little wicket, Richard presently found himself in the walled enclosure which had once been the Manor House garden, for Littlecomb had been the dower house of a noble family ; along the straight prim paths stately ladies had loved to pace, and the lavender hedge which was Rosalie's pride had been the pride of many a titled dame before her. It was more of a pleasant wilderness than a garden now, having been neglected by Elias and his predecessors on the farm ; but Rosalie was endeavouring to reclaim it, and already had made progress with the work. Richard, walking slowly onward, glanced anxiously down the dim alleys, and peered into various overgrown bowers. At length, amid a mass of distant

greenery, he descried a moving figure, and, quickening his pace, advanced towards it. The afterglow had now almost faded, and the moon had not yet risen; here beneath these high walls and amid this dense growth everything looked shadowy and unreal.

He would scarcely have distinguished which was path and which was flower-border had he not been guided towards the spot where she stood by a double line of white pinks. Now a blossom-laden apple-bough barred his progress; now he passed beneath an arch of monthly roses, brushing off the moisture from leaf and bloom as he went.

All at once Rosalie's voice called through the dusk:

'Is that you, Susan? Come here for a moment; I want you to hold this branch.'

Richard made no reply, but hastened on. The shadowy figure turned, and he saw the pale silhouette of her face. She was standing beneath a great bush laden with white blossoms, which from their size and perfume he judged to be lilac; she had drawn down a branch and was endeavouring to detach one of the clustering blooms.

'Who is it?' she said quickly.

'It is I,' he returned.

She loosed the branch, which flew rustling up to join its fellows, and made a step forward; he could see her face more clearly now; the gleam of her white teeth between her parted lips; he even fancied that he could detect an angry sparkle in her eyes.

'Why do you come here?' she said. 'Here at least I supposed myself safe.'

'I came,' replied Richard, in an unsteady voice, 'to beg your pardon most humbly, most sincerely, for my conduct to you to-day.'

'It was inexcusable,' she said, after a pause. It seemed to him that she was breathing quickly—perhaps with a just and natural anger.

'I do not attempt to excuse it,' he murmured.

'I cannot even understand it,' she pursued. 'What had I done to you? How do my private concerns affect you?'

There was a long silence, and then Richard said, almost in a whisper:

'I can make no excuse—I think I must have been mad! When I came to myself I felt—as if I could kill myself for my brutality to you. All day the shame of it has been eating into

my soul—I feel branded, disgraced! I cannot rest until you tell me you have forgiven me.'

There was silence again, broken only by the faint warbling of a thrush singing to his mate in the warm dusk.

'You ask a great deal,' said Rosalie at last. 'I scarcely know how I can forgive you.'

She saw the dark figure sway a little, but he spoke quietly:

'I can only say that I would give my life to recall those insulting words of mine.'

'Words!' she repeated. 'Words count for little! That you should think of me thus—that you should judge me so harshly!'

He said nothing; the thrush sang on, the liquid notes rising and falling with almost unendurable sweetness.

Then, 'I entreat you!' he pleaded once more. 'I entreat you to forgive me!'

She stretched out her hand in silence, and he took it without a word; it was cold, very cold, and it trembled.

She drew it away almost as soon as his fingers had closed upon it, and he turned and went away, his footsteps falling with unaccustomed heaviness on the little path; and presently the gate swung to behind him.

Isaac was sitting by the dying fire, a foot resting on either hob, and surrounded by a haze of tobacco-smoke, when his nephew entered. He looked towards Richard with an aggrieved expression as he crossed the room.

'Well, them there legs o' yourn should be pretty well stretched by now. I was wonderin' whether you were comin' back at all to-night. Where have ye been all this while?'

Richard hesitated, and then, throwing back his head, answered deliberately:

'I've been to see Mrs. Fyander.'

'What! to Littlecomb at this time o' night! What ever took 'ee there so late?'

'Why, to tell you the truth, I went to make an apology to Mrs. Fyander. She came across the top field to-day when I was ploughing, and I said something which hurt her feelings—in fact, I offended her very much, and I felt I could not rest to-night without begging her pardon.'

'Oh,' said the farmer, and then paused, eyes and mouth round with astonished concern. 'Well,' he continued presently, 'I'm glad as ye 'polygised. I'm very glad as ye 'polygised, Richard. 'Ees, that was very well done of 'ee. But what did you go for to offend her for?'

He leaned forward, anxious wrinkles still furrowing his brow, and puckering up his mouth as though he was going to whistle. By-and-by, indeed, he did actually whistle, under his breath and without any regard for tune. Richard, meanwhile, stood looking down into the fire as though he had not heard the question.

'Eh?' hinted his uncle at last.

'Oh, I beg your pardon! I can't think, I'm sure, how I came to forget myself so. I was out of temper, I suppose.'

'Ah,' commented the farmer. 'Well, I can say truly as she and me ha' never had a word, not since I knowed her. Nay, not so much as one word! We did al'ays get on wonderful well in 'Lias' time, and now I do really think as we gets on better than ever.'

'So you ought to,' said Richard, a trifle irritably; then he added in a softer tone: 'I don't believe anyone could quarrel with you, Uncle Isaac.'

'Well, d'ye see,' explained Isaac, waving his pipe impressively, 'even if I was a quarrelsome man—which I bain't—I never should ax to quarrel wi' she. I'm oncommon fond o' Mrs. F.!'

To this Richard made no rejoinder. Stretching out his foot he pushed the logs together, and then stood looking down at them again.

'I'm sorry, Richard, as ye should ha' hurt her feelings,' went on the farmer, after ruminating for some time in evident distress of mind. 'Ah, I be very sorry for that, but ye couldn't do no more nor 'polygise; nay, ye couldn't do more nor that. I'm glad ye did 'polygise, Richard.'

'So am I,' said Richard huskily; adding, with the same irritation which he had previously displayed: 'Not that it makes much difference one way or the other.'

'Tis a bad thing,' went on the farmer, 'for to hurt a woman's feelin's in the beginning of acquaintance; it makes a bad start, d'ye see? It do rouse up notions as they'd maybe never ha' thought on if they wasn't crossed in the beginning. Now my poor mother—your grandmother, Richard—she did have sich tender feelin's there was no livin' in th' house wi' her. And my father—ah, I've heard 'en tell the tale many a time—he did always set it down to his not havin' been careful to keep the right side o' her when they was a-coortin'. 'Twas this way, d'ye see? My father was a bit of a buck in his day, an' a'most up to the time when he had his banns put up wi' my mother he liked to have his fling,

d'ye see? He'd walk o' one Sunday wi' one maid, and the next maybe he'd go along wi' another; and the third maybe he'd go a-fishin', and there'd be my poor mother wi' her best bonnet on all the time a-lookin' out for 'en so anxious. And she got that upset in her feelin's, and that nervous, ye know, that she wasn't the better for it all her life after. Ah, I've heard my father say often when she'd scratched his face for him, or thrown his hat into the wash-tub, "Tis my own fault," he'd say, "I didn't use to consider her feelin's as a young 'un, and her feelin's is a-comin' agen me now."

Isaac shook his head slowly over this affecting reminiscence, and restored his pipe to its favourite corner. Richard said nothing for a moment, but presently turned towards his uncle with a smile.

'Don't you be afraid, Uncle Isaac. Mrs. Fyander's temper is perfect, I am sure. I was entirely in fault to-day, and I will promise most faithfully not to do anything which might disturb your peace of mind in future.'

Though he spoke with assumed lightness, there was an earnest look in his eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

Some friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then heigh, ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly!

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN Sunday came round Isaac Sharpe surprised his nephew by inviting him to accompany him on his usual visit to Littlecomb.

'I don't think you want me,' said Richard, colouring and hesitating; 'I should only be in the way. Two are company, and three are none, you know.'

'Nay now, 'tis a silly notion that. "The more the merrier," I say. Besides, I have particular reasons for wanting you to come to-day. You and Mrs. F. haven't met since that night as ye 'polygised, have ye?'

'No,' said Richard.

'And I noticed you hung behind when I was talkin' to her arter church this mornin'. Was 'ee ashamed o' meetin' her?'

'That's about it,' said Richard.

'Nay, but that will never do. If ye go on a-hangin' back,

and a-keepin' out o' her way, things will get awk'arder and awk'arder atween ye. Now, take my advice and come along wi' I quite quiet and nat'ral; it'll all pass off so easy as ye could wish. Just drop in same as myself. I want 'ee to be friends.'

'Well, I can't refuse if you put it like that,' said Marshall. And the two sallied forth together.

In spite of Mr. Sharpe's prognostication, there was decidedly a little awkwardness about the young people's meeting. Rosalie greeted Richard somewhat stiffly, and invited him with formal politeness to take a seat.

'Tis a fine day,' began Isaac, as he installed himself in the high-backed elbow-chair which had now become his by consecrated right. Rosalie responded hastily that it was a very fine day.

'Ah,' remarked the farmer, with a covert note of warning in his voice, 'my nevvie was a-sayin' as we come along that it was a wonderful fine day for the time o' year—didn't 'ee, Richard?'

As it happened to be the time of year when fine days were not uncommon, this alleged observation would not have testified to any extraordinary perspicacity on Richard's part; but as a matter of fact it was entirely fictitious. Nevertheless the young man did not repudiate it.

'Yes,' he said, with his eyes on the floor; 'yes, to be sure.'

'Didn't 'ee find it uncommon warm in church, Mrs. F.?' pursued Mr. Sharpe, after a short silence.

'Yes, I did,' agreed she. 'I was longing for someone to open the door.'

'Mrs. F. d' say,' cried Isaac, turning to his nephew with an explanatory bawl, which was intended to stimulate him to further efforts at conversation—'Mrs. F. d' say, Richard, as she found it uncommon warm in church.'

Richard's eyes travelled slowly from the carpet to his uncle's face, where they rested; for the life of him he could not muster courage to move them to the blooming face on the other side.

'Oh,' he commented faintly; 'did she?'

'Ees,' said Isaac emphatically; 'do 'ee ax her——' Here he jerked his thumb significantly in Rosalie's direction. 'She d' say as she was a-wishin' as somebody 'ud open the door—didn't 'ee, my dear?'

'Yes, indeed,' said Rosalie.

'Ah, she'll tell 'ee about that, Richard,' went on Isaac; and his enormous boot came slowly sliding across the floor till it reached Richard's foot, which it proceeded to kick in an admoni-

tory fashion. 'Jist ax her about that—If ye'd ha' known she was wantin' the door open you'd ha' opened it fast enough for Mrs. F., wouldn't 'ee, Richard?'

'Certainly,' responded Marshall, with his eyes still glued on his uncle's face.

'Ah, you can jist talk about that,' hinted the latter, as he proceeded to search in his pocket for his pipe.

A dead silence ensued. Isaac looked from one to the other, and the perspiration stood upon his brow. His strenuous efforts had exhausted him, but the desired consummation seemed just as far off as ever.

'Have you got your tobacco-box, Uncle Isaac?' inquired the dutiful nephew presently.

'Let me give you a light,' said Rosalie.

There they were again! What was the good of their talking to him? He wanted them to talk to each other.

'Richard,' said Isaac, after sucking for a moment at his pipe—when Rosalie applied the match a flash of inspiration had come to him—'Richard, my boy, ye haven't been round this here farm since ye come home, have 'ee?'

'No,' said Richard; 'but I know it well of old.'

'Ah, but there's been improvements since ye left—there's been a many improvements. Ye'd better take him round, Mrs. F., and show him all what's been done the last few years. He be uncommon fond o' stretching his legs—Richard be—and it'll just suit him—won't it, Richard?'

Richard stammered confusedly that he should like it of all things.

'And you be a wonderful one for fresh air yourself, Mrs. F.,' went on the diplomatist. 'Jist take 'en out and show 'en everything, there's a good soul.'

Rosalie had risen willingly enough, for she had found the previous constraint exceedingly uncomfortable; but she now paused hesitatingly.

'Aren't you coming, Mr. Sharpe?'

'Nay, my dear, I'll stay where I be. 'Tis very comfortable here i' th' chimney corner, and I bain't so young as I was, d'ye see? Nay, you two young folks can go out and freshen yourselves up a bit, and make acquaintance; and the wold man will bide at home, and smoke his pipe, and be ready for tea when you come back.'

He nodded at them both with an air of finality, and twisted

round his chair so as to present to their gaze a large and inflexible back.

'Well, then, we had better start if we are to be back by tea-time,' said Rosalie, a little sharply; and Richard took up his hat, and followed her out in silence.

The whole place was wrapped in Sabbath stillness; milking was over, and a distant line of red and dappled cows was vanishing down the lane, followed by one or two of the dairy 'chaps,' with white pinners protecting their Sunday clothes. Save for the calves, which thrust their blunt, moist noses through the bars of their enclosure, and the fowl cackling lazily as they lay sunning themselves in the angle of the barn, the barton was absolutely deserted.

'We drained the big mead four years ago,' said Rosalie, 'and threw the twenty-acre into it; 'tis beautiful pasture now. Would you like to see it?'

Richard hurriedly expressed a desire to that effect, and the two betook themselves in silence along a narrow farm-track to the rear of the house, which led to the field in question. They walked with the breadth of the lane between them, and in unbroken silence; their eyes, by common accord, gazing straight in front, and both secretly rebelling against the expedient which Isaac had deemed so happily devised. At length they came to a gate set in the hedge, and turned to look over it. A great green expanse stretched away before their gaze, meeting the sky-line on one side where it sloped upwards, and melting on the other into the lighter, more delicate green of springing corn; beyond were the woods, which, as well as the low line of hills behind them, were covered by a gentle haze.

Richard leaned his elbows on the topmost rail of the gate, and his face gradually cleared as his eyes roamed over the landscape.

This county of Dorset has given birth to more than one great writer of lowly origin, whose early nurture amid field and heath and woodland has fostered an intimate and loving sympathy with Nature, to which each in turn has given exquisite expression. Richard Marshall, born of the same sturdy peasant stock, brought up amid the same pastoral surroundings, possessed a somewhat kindred spirit, though he was denied this gift of expression. Yet the inglorious rustic Milton was not always mute; he had read so much, and meditated so much, and, above all, felt so deeply, that at times something of what he thought and felt

struggled to his lips and found vent in words, inadequate, indeed, but suggestive.

'How beautiful it all is!' he said, turning to Rosalie, with a very poet's rapture in his eyes. 'It seems to fill one like music.'

'Yet I suppose you have seen far finer sights during your travels,' returned she, speaking naturally for the first time, as she, too, leaned over the gate.

'Finer things? Oh, yes, perhaps; but this homely beauty touches me as no other sight could do. Something about a great stretch of green like this always affects me curiously. I love these wide fields.'

'Yes, I remember your saying so,' said Rosalie. The ice was broken now and she could talk to him freely, even taking courage to broach a subject which had much occupied her thoughts lately. 'You told me, you know, how pleased you were at the sight of the cornfield in—in my picture.'

He did not turn towards her, and continued to scan the mead; but over his brown face she saw the colour rush quickly.

'Oh, yes,' he said; 'of course I remember telling you about it.'

'I wanted to ask you was—was the picture a very large one; and was it well painted?'

'Yes, very large indeed, and beautifully painted. There was an iron railing in front of it because people pressed round it so. I was told it was the picture of the year.'

'Was it?' cried Rosalie; and at the note of delight in her voice he turned and looked at her with a smile. Her cheeks were pink with excitement, her eyes shining. 'Oh!' she cried, with a sigh of longing, 'I would give anything to see it.'

'I have a little print of it here,' returned he impulsively; 'I cut it out of a paper. It will give you some idea of it, though of course a very poor one.'

In another moment he partly withdrew from its enclosure the print in question, holding the envelope firmly in his own hand, however, so that the charred margin was hidden.

'See,' he said, pointing with his disengaged hand, 'there is your house—over there in the corner, and here are your men, and here, under the piled-up sheaves, are you. But of course the figure in the picture is far more like you.'

'I see,' said Rosalie. 'Yes, it must be a nice picture; and you say it is beautifully done?'

'It is beautifully done. It is so real, so vivid, that I felt as if I could walk into the picture. These sheaves stand out so that one might think it easy to pass behind them.'

He glanced up as he said these words, and was surprised to see Rosalie colour almost to the temples. His own heart gave a sudden throb. Was it possible that she had divined the audacious thought which had so often come to him as he recalled that picture, and which, since his uncle's revelations, he had resolutely striven to banish?

As a matter of fact there did happen to be a certain similarity between this thought of his and that which had caused Rosalie to change colour. For there had flashed across her mind the remembrance of the unknown artist's words: 'Perhaps if I come across a very attractive specimen of a rustic I may place him just behind the stook.'

'This is the name underneath, I suppose?' she said hastily. 'What is the picture called? I cannot see from here.'

'It is called "A Sleeping Beauty,"' returned Richard.

She was dumb for a moment, hot waves of colour rushing over brow and neck. What was it the man had said last year? 'You will wake up some day, my beauty.' Words of ill omen! They had often tantalised and tormented her, but now, as they recurred to her, her heart seemed to stand still. Ashamed of her burning face, on which the young man's eyes were now fixed, and of the agitation which she could not master, she suddenly bent forward confusedly.

'What is the name of the painter? Let me look.'

Before Richard could divine her intention she had snatched the print from his hand, its black and jagged edges immediately catching her eye.

'Why,' she said in an altered tone—'why, it is burnt.'

It was now Richard's turn to look confused.

'I began to burn it, but repented of my intention.'

'You wanted to burn it,' said Rosalie, 'because you were so angry with me. Why were you so angry with me? Was it because of—of what your uncle told you?'

'Yes.'

'I know he did not mean to do me harm,' said Rosalie tremulously, 'but I don't think he—he can have made you understand properly. Everything was going wrong, and—and I was so much bothered; I found I could not manage by myself, and he had been my poor Elias's friend'—she was beginning to sob now—

'and I knew I could trust him not to do anything Elias wouldn't have liked, and—oh, it is so difficult to explain!'

'Pray do not try to explain,' said Richard, very gently.

'But you shouldn't misjudge me as you do,' cried she, and then burst into tears.

'I do not misjudge you now,' said Richard in a low voice. 'Oh, don't cry! I assure you I understand. You have been quite right—quite right all along.'

The big tearful blue eyes looked at him over the crumpled handkerchief.

'But you said—you said I sold myself,' she gasped. 'You shouldn't have said that! I loved my husband.'

'I am sure you did,' said Richard gravely and tenderly.

'Yes, indeed I did. I loved him from the first. He was like a father to me.'

'Yes, yes,' said Richard, and he looked at her with an odd mixture of wonder and compassion.

'He was just as kind and dotingly fond of me as my own dear granfer.'

'To be sure,' said Richard. 'Yes; no wonder you loved him.'

Something in his tone caused Rosalie to pull down her handkerchief and to cast a keen glance at him.

'Why do you look at me like that?' she said passionately.

'Was I looking at you in any particular way?' returned he, averting his eyes quickly.

'Yes, you were. You were looking at me as if you were sorry for me! How dare you be sorry for me?'

'Were you not telling me,' he said quietly, 'how much you felt the loss of your good old husband?'

'You know it was not that,' she retorted. 'You looked at me as if I were a child who had no sense—as if I did not know what I was saying.'

'Did I?' said Richard. 'I beg your pardon.'

'Is that what you really think of me?' pursued she, her eyes full of wrathful fire, though the tears were still standing on her cheeks. 'Answer me—I insist on your answering me!'

Richard's gaze had been fixed on the little print which she was holding, and Rosalie, marking this, had felt an increase of indignation. Did he dare to share the opinion which the artist had so impertinently pronounced? Rousing himself, however, he turned towards her, and their eyes met.

'I do think,' he said, 'that you know very little of life.'

Perhaps it is all the better for you. The fruit of the tree of knowledge is nearly always bitter—and sometimes it is poisonous.'

Rosalie was about to make a very angry rejoinder when the sound of steps close to them made them both suddenly start; on looking round they beheld a loving couple, such as are so frequently to be met with in rural districts on Sunday afternoons, sauntering down the lane.

Rosalie hastily restored her handkerchief to her pocket, and again leaned over the gate, endeavouring to assume a careless attitude; but she was secretly much annoyed, for the young man who was so gallantly escorting a much befringed and beribboned lady was no other than Sam Belbin. At any other time she would have been somewhat amused on discovering how soon her lowly admirer had consoled himself. He was working at Branston now, and his companion was evidently a townswoman; but that he should come on her just then, in the midst of her tears and wrath, with Richard Marshall in such close proximity, was most vexatious.

Sam stared hard as he approached, taking in, as Rosalie felt though she did not again look towards him, every compromising detail of the situation. When they had passed on he made some facetious remark to the girl on whose arm he was hanging, to which she responded by loud laughter.

The little incident impressed Rosalie disagreeably: she turned to Richard petulantly, holding out the little print which had been the cause of so much agitation.

'You had better finish burning this,' she said.

'Perhaps I had,' returned he, with unexpected docility.

Isaac looked so placid and cheery when they entered, and greeted them with so bright a smile, that Rosalie was conscious of a sudden rush of remorse.

Going up to him she placed her hand upon his shoulder, a caress which astonished its recipient mightily, for he was not accustomed to endearments from her. Rosalie kept her hand there, however, glancing defiantly at Richard the while, as though to say, 'You are wrong in thinking me so ignorant; see how I love and appreciate this good man;' and Richard smiled back kindly, as if replying, 'I see it, indeed, and I am glad that you are content.'

'Well,' said Isaac, squinting down sideways at Rosalie's hand. 'Well, Mrs. F., did you take 'em all over the place?'

'I took Mr. Marshall to see the big mead,' returned she, a little doubtfully.

'Ah, I'm sure he thought that improved. Well, and then you took 'en up to see the root crop?'

'No—no, we didn't go there; we didn't like to go too far, as you were here by yourself.'

'Why, I were all right.' Here Isaac slowly lifted the shoulder on which Rosalie's hand still lingered, and again glanced down at it. As, taking the hint, she withdrew it, he gently rubbed the place where it had rested.

'You took 'en down to the carn-field, though,' he continued. 'I'll engage he thought them oats was a-comin' on wonderful.'

But they had not been to the corn-field, it appeared, nor yet to see the potatoes, nor round by the vegetable garden, nor through the orchard; they had just been to the big mead and back.

'Well,' commented Mr. Sharpe, gazing at them in amazement, 'ye must ha' walked uncommon slow!'

'We stood for some time looking at the view,' said Richard, seeing Rosalie somewhat confounded.

'Lookin' at the view, eh?' echoed his uncle. 'There bain't any view to speak on from the mead. If you'd ha' gone a bit further up the lane and turned the corner ye'd ha' had a beautiful view o' Branston. But if you enj'yed yourselves it's all right.'

He wheeled round in his chair as he made this last remark, and looked from one to the other of the young folks. Both faces were alike downcast, and somewhat paler than usual. After a moment's scrutiny Isaac became as crestfallen as they.

'So long as you enj'yed yourselves,' he repeated slowly. 'So long as ye've a-made friends—I want 'ee to be friends, d'ye see?'

Rosalie and Richard glanced at each other. He read in her face a kind of antagonism mingled with fear, and dropped his eyes quickly lest they might betray the anguish and longing with which his heart was full to bursting.

'I want 'ee to be friends, d'ye see?' repeated the farmer anxiously and pleadingly. 'There's me and you, Mrs. F., as friendly as can be; and there's you and me, Richard—you're much the same's a son to me, bain't ye?—well, then there's you and Mrs. F., why shouldn't 'ee be friendly wi' her?'

Richard, to whom the question was directed, remained dumb. *Friends!* Could they ever be friends?

Rosalie, however, made a step forward and extended her hand.

'Why should we not, indeed?' she said. 'To tell you the truth, Isaac, we have done nothing but quarrel since we first met each other, which was very silly and unreasonable of us. Now,

for your sake I am determined not to quarrel any more ; and for your sake, I think, he too should be willing to keep the peace.'

'Well said!' cried Isaac heartily. 'Well said, Mrs. F.! Now Richard, my boy, where's your hand? Just catch hold o' Mrs. F.'s. That's it—that's it! Shake it well!' Here he thumped the arm of his chair jubilantly. 'You'll be the best o' friends from this day for'ard! Here we be, we three, friends all! Jist as me and poor 'Lias and Mrs. F. was friends—dear heart alive! yes, we was friends too—the best o' friends! We was three then, and we be three now, bain't us, Mrs. F.? We three! I do mind a old song as your poor dear mother used to sing, Richard :

'When shall we three meet agen?
In starm, in zunshine, ar in rain!

Lard, yes, she used to sing it, poor soul! Well, now we be three agen, bain't us? Three good friends! So, if you'll mix the usu'l glass, Mrs. F., we'll drink to the bond o' good fellowship.'

'Yes, of course,' said Rosalie indistinctly. 'I forgot all about your glass, Isaac; I'm so sorry; I'll see to it at once.'

She ran out of the room, glad to make her escape, and Richard sat down near the hearth.

Friends! They were to be friends as his uncle, and Elias, and Rosalie had once been friends! He had felt her hand twitch in his as Isaac had spoken; to her the proposition was doubtless as distasteful as to him it was impossible. What was his uncle thinking of? There were some things which flesh and blood—young flesh and blood—could not brook, and this triangular bond was one of them. But he would be patient for a little while; he would choke down his rebellious sense of injury. His secret, thank Heaven! was secure; neither the guileless Isaac nor Rosalie herself had the faintest idea of the miserable passion which he was striving so hard to conquer. What was it she had said? They were to be friends—friends for his uncle's sake. His uncle, to whom he owed everything—his kind, faithful, generous old benefactor. Well, he would try.

That night, in the seclusion of his attic room, he once more drew forth Rosalie's picture.

'Sleep on, Beauty,' he said. 'Sleep on in peace! I shall not try to wake you. Sleep soundly; do not even dream.'

And, after a last silent look, he held it steadily in the flame of the candle, watching its destruction unflinchingly until the last feathery film dropped from his fingers.

CHAPTER VII.

And times he saith : ' Why must man aye forego ?
 And why is life a nobler thing through pain ?'
 And times : ' Since Love's sweet apple hangs so low,
 Shall I not strongly grasp and count it gain ?'

ELINOR SWEETMAN.

FOR some time after Isaac's apparently successful peacemaking the friendly relations between the parties concerned remained unbroken. Richard was frequently sent on messages to Littlecomb, acquitting himself on these occasions in a strictly business-like manner ; and when he accompanied his uncle thither he made such strenuous efforts to appear at his ease and to entertain its hostess that Isaac was delighted beyond measure.

' How th' chap d' talk !' he would say sometimes under his breath, with an admiring nod and wink. ' Bless me, he d' talk like prent ! I d' 'low there isn't very much as my nevvv don't know.'

Richard, indeed, in his desire to avoid those terrible long silences which had so much discomposed him during his first visits to Littlecomb, embarked upon wild flights of fancy, related at length his past experiences, and delivered his opinion upon men and things with a fluency which frequently surprised himself. The fact was that he was afraid to pause ; were he to come to a halt when those blue eyes were fixed upon him, could he ever take up the thread of his discourse again ? Even as it was, the mere consciousness of that intent gaze made him sometimes falter ; but, recovering himself, he would go on with a rush, knowing that he was making many wild statements, but persevering nevertheless. He was bound to do all the talking, if talking there must be, for Rosalie was very silent, and his uncle was at no time garrulous.

But the harmony of these relations was rudely broken by an unexpected incident.

One warm afternoon, early in June, Farmer Sharpe chanced to be standing by his own gate, gazing abstractedly up and down the lane. Presently he descried an undersized, narrow-chested figure making its way towards him, and, as it drew near, recognised Mr. Samuel Cross.

' Fine evenin',' remarked Isaac, nodding sideways in his direction, and expecting him to pass on.

' A very fine evening, Mr. Sharpe,' returned Samuel, pausing.

and leaning against the gate-post, with the evident intention of entering into conversation. 'The very evenin' for a quiet walk.'

'Walkin' bain't much in my line,' returned Isaac. 'Nay, not without I'm obliged to—seein' after the men, and goin' round the fields, and across the downs to look after the sheep; but walkin'—meanin' goin' for a walk jist for pleasure—it bain't in my line at all.'

'It's in other people's line, though,' said Samuel; and he shot a cunning glance at the older man out of his little red-rimmed eyes. 'I met your nephew strolling up towards Littlecomb just now.'

'Very like ye did,' agreed Sharpe. 'He do often go up there on business.'

'Lucky chap!' exclaimed Cross. 'The rest of us don't often contrive to make business agree so well with pleasure.'

He paused to snigger, and Isaac turned his mild grey eyes inquiringly upon him.

'Nay, Samuel Cross,' he remarked, 'I don't suppose as *you* do.'

The slight stress laid upon the personal pronoun appeared to irritate the young gentleman, and he replied with a certain acerbity:

'There isn't, as a rule, much pleasure to be found in doing honest business, Mr. Sharpe.'

'Not among lawyers,' said Isaac, nodding placidly. 'So I've been told.'

'There's others besides lawyers, though,' cried Samuel, 'as aren't so very honest! He! he! You're a very confiding man, Mr. Sharpe—a very confiding uncle. 'Tisn't everyone in your situation that would care to make such a handsome young man his business-manager where a handsome young woman was concerned. He! he! Your nephew, no doubt, will do the business thoroughly—perhaps a little too thoroughly.'

'My nevvie,' returned Isaac loftily, 'may be trusted to do his dooty, Sam'el. 'Tis more nor can be said for many folks as be all for pokin' their noses where they bain't wanted!'

Mr. Cross's always sallow complexion assumed an even more jaundiced hue as he retorted:

'Most people do no business on Sunday—in England they don't at least; but I suppose Mr. Richard Marshall has brought foreign notions back with him. He was seen two or three weeks ago doing *business* with Mrs. Fyander quite as per usual. They

were standin' close together lookin' over a gate, just as if he and she were keepin' company. And he was tellin' her such touchin' business details that she was actually crying, Mr. Sharpe.'

'Cryin'!' ejaculated Isaac, in a kind of roar. 'Stuff and nonsense! What had she to cry for?'

'How should I know? Because prices had gone down, I suppose, since, according to you, they talk nothing but business when they are together.'

'Oh, drop that,' cried the farmer, losing patience at last. 'What be you a-drivin' at, Sam'el Cross, wi' your hints?'

'Why,' rejoined Samuel, thrusting his thumbs into his waistcoat pockets—'why, the remark as was passed by the young man that saw them in the lane will perhaps throw some light on the subject. Says he, "I believe," he says, "as the widow Fyander be a-takin' on wi' the new love before she is off wi' the old." So if I do drop a hint, Mr. Sharpe'—and Samuel assumed a virtuous air, and struck an appropriate attitude—'I do it in the way of kindness. Take my advice and *look sharp*—look like your name, sir! We lawyers see a deal of the world, a deal of the wickedness of the world, and we know that worthy folks are often caught napping. But don't you be caught, farmer—keep a good look-out, or your bride will be snapped up from under your very nose.'

'Now I'll tell you what it is, Sam'el Cross,' cried Isaac, who had been shifting from one foot to the other during the latter part of the clerk's speech, and was purple in the face with suppressed ire, 'since you're so fond of advice maybe you'll take a bit from me. Jist you keep that long tongue o' yourn quiet. What do ye mean, ye little treecherous spy, by poking your nose into other people's business and tryin' to make mischief between them that's as good as father and son? I know my nevvie a deal better than you know him. My nevvie bain't a snapper, an' so I tell 'ee! Now you jist take yourself off out of this, and don't 'ee come here wi' no more lyin' tales, else maybe ye'll find this here stick o' mine laid about your shoulders. I bain't so strong as I were, but I could make a shift to hit 'ee a crack or two—so now ye know.'

Samuel had started back as words and gestures grew threatening, and now deemed it better to beat a retreat; turning, however, at a safe distance to bestow a withering valedictory smile upon his adversary, and to remark that he was sorry for him.

Ever since his rejection by Rosalie he had been burning with resentment against her, and desirous of an opportunity of venting it. A chance meeting with Sam Belbin had resulted in the latter's imparting to him a highly-coloured version of the scene which he had witnessed between Rosalie and Richard in the lane. The desired opportunity seemed to have arrived, and Samuel had hastened to take advantage of it, with, as has been seen, indifferent success. As he now hastened away as rapidly as his short legs would carry him he encountered the very person he had been so anxious to traduce. Richard nodded, and would have passed on, but that Cross, who was still suffering from a redundancy of spite, thought the opportunity favourable for venting it.

'You are back already,' he remarked. 'I wonder you didn't contrive to be a bit longer over your *business*! You wouldn't ha' been missed yonder. Your uncle seems quite content with your doings. As I told him just now—he has a confiding nature.'

'What do you mean?' said Richard, speaking in a low even voice, but with an ominous flash of the eyes.

'Ha! you know what I mean well enough, you sly young dog! If you don't, ask the fascinating young widow—ask lovely, dainty Mrs. F. She knows what she's about, though she contrives to look so demure. Come,' marking the expression of Richard's face, 'you needn't turn rusty over it—I'll tell no tales, bless you! But there's others besides me that has been passing remarks about the Widow Fyander's new business-manager. Ha! ha!—You may carry on, though, as far as I am concerned—perhaps I know a little too much about the lady to envy you; she has played a double game before now. As for the old man, *he'll* find out nothing; he's as blind as a bat—as blind as a bat!'

Here Mr. Cross thrust his tongue into his cheek, and made a hideous contortion of countenance calculated to convey an impression of his own extreme artfulness and of his contempt for the old farmer's short-sightedness.

His own vision, perhaps, might with advantage have been a little clearer; a man of quicker perceptions would have realised that Richard's persistent silence was more fraught with danger to him than a torrent of wrathful words. He was, therefore, considerably surprised when Marshall suddenly brought down his vigorous right hand upon the cheek at that moment distended by Samuel's malevolent tongue, and, before he had time to spring

backwards, the other palm inflicted similar chastisement on its fellow.

The lawyer's clerk gasped, spluttered, and finally uttered a choking howl.

'Hang you! You've made me nearly bite my tongue off!'

'Serve you right if I had,' cried Richard. 'You little reptile, if you so much as say another word of this kind I'll half kill you!'

He had seized Samuel by the shoulders and was now shaking him slowly backwards and forwards:

'Do you take back every word of your vile slanders?'

'Ye—ye—yes,' gasped Cross, in an agony of terror.

'Will you give me your word to keep that foul tongue of yours quiet in future?'

'Oh Lord, yes, Richard Marshall. For Heaven's sake let me go! You've about half killed me as it is!'

Richard released him with a parting admonition to look out, and Cross went on his way with a staggering gait, and stuffing his pocket-handkerchief into his mouth.

Richard, still in a white heat of passion, was striding along at a tremendous rate, when he suddenly observed the large white-clad person of his uncle standing contemplatively some twenty yards away from the scene of the encounter. His good-humoured face wore a pleasant and satisfied smile.

'Well done, lad!' he remarked, as soon as Richard came within hearing. 'Ye did give it 'en in style! I never did see nothing more neat. I do rather think, Richard, as Mr. Sam'el Cross 'ull have the toothache. I d' 'low he will.'

'I only wish I had made every bone in his body ache!' cried Richard, still fuming.

'I d' 'low as he said something as ann'yed 'ee, Richard,' said the farmer, ceasing his placid chuckles and looking intently at his nephew.

'Yes,' returned Richard, 'he annoyed me very much. He—in point of fact, he insulted me.'

'Well, now,' commented Isaac, 'that was strange. I didn't think he'd insult 'ee to your face, Richard. He was a-talkin' to me jist now, and he did say some very insultin' things agen you—but that was behind your back, d'ye see? I didn't think the chap would acshally go for to say 'em to your face.'

'What did he say of me?' said Richard breathlessly.

'Why, he did say redic'lous things about you and Mrs. F.

Ah, the little raskil couldn't so much as leave Mrs. F.'s name out! And he were very uncivil to me—ye'd scarce believe how uncivil he were. Up and told me straight out as if I didn't look out you'd be snappin' up Mrs. F. without "By your leave," or "With your leave." But I give it 'en back well, I can tell 'ee. Says I, "My nevvie bain't a snapper," says I. Them was my very words. "Ye little treacherous spy," I says, "don't 'ee be a-pokin' your nose into other folks' business. I know my nevvie," I says, "and my nevvie bain't a snapper."

Here Isaac paused to chuckle jubilantly, and, turning, slapped his nephew jovially on the back.

'What do you think of that for an answer, eh?'

'Why, that it was an excellent one,' said Richard, beginning to stride on again so rapidly that his uncle could scarcely keep pace with him.

'And I told him, too,' pursued the latter, 'that if he came agen with sich lyin' tales I'd lay my stick about his shoulders.'

'I'm glad you said that,' exclaimed the young man without turning his head. 'I'm glad you told him they were lying tales. They *are* lying tales!'

'And the stick,' Isaac reminded him with modest triumph. 'I reckon I brought it in rather neat about the stick. Says I, "I bain't quite so young as I were, but I could make shift to hit 'ee a crack or two yet."'

'I wish I had thrashed him within an inch of his life!' came the savage comment thrown over Richard's shoulder.

'Lard, Richard, how you do lay them long legs o' yours to the ground,' panted Isaac, pausing to wipe his brow. 'I'm fair out o' breath. Bide a bit—bide a bit; let me blow. There, don't 'ee be in sich a takin', lad. I reckon them there little taps as ye gave Sam'el Cross 'ull keep 'en quiet for some time. He be gone t'other way, anyhow; and it won't do 'ee no good to run me off my legs.'

Richard came slowly back; his face was fixed and stern, but he spoke more quietly.

'Uncle, I blame myself to a certain extent for what has happened. I might have guessed that in a gossiping little place like this people would talk if I went so often to Littlecomb. I must keep away altogether for the present.'

'Nay now, don't 'ee let yourself get so upset. What signifies a bit of idle chatter! You don't need to take no notice of it at all.'

'But I will take notice of it,' cried Richard. 'I don't choose that people should take liberties with my name; and what is worse—with hers. I need not assure you, Uncle Isaac, that I have never said one word to Mrs. Fyander that anyone need find fault with.'

'To be sure,' agreed Isaac, 'of course not.' He came to a sudden pause, however, and cast a sidelong look at his nephew, scratching his jaw meditatively. 'There was one day—one Sunday—Sam'el Cross was a-sayin', somebody seed you both standin' a-lookin' over a gate, and Mrs. F. was a-cryin'. That wasn't very likely, I don't think. 'Twasn't very likely as you'd say aught as 'ud make Mrs. F. cry.'

Richard drew a quick breath, and his hands involuntarily clenched themselves.

'She did cry one day,' he said. 'It was the first Sunday you took me to Littlecomb. She imagined'—hesitatingly—'that I had a bad opinion of her, and she cried, and said I was unjust.'

'That'll be the day you went to see the big mead,' said Farmer Sharpe reflectively. 'Ye hadn't made friends then. Ye haven't made her cry since, Richard, have 'ee?'

'Of course not.'

'Women be so fanciful. Ye didn't really have a bad opinion of her, Richard?'

'Far from it.'

'She be a very dear woman—a very dear woman. 'Tisn't very likely as anybody 'ud have a bad opinion of Mrs. F. Well, ye be real true friends now, and ye don't need to take no notice of idle talk. Let there be no coolness between ye on that account.'

Richard, however, remained fixed in his determination to avoid Littlecomb for the future, and in spite of his uncle's protests adhered to his resolution. On the following Sunday he was somewhat discomposed to find Rosalie's eyes straying towards him once or twice as he knelt on the opposite side of the church, and it seemed to him that they wore a questioning, pleading expression.

His purpose, however, remained unshaken, and immediately after the early dinner he went out without saying anything to his uncle, and could not be found when the hour came for their weekly pilgrimage to Littlecomb. After waiting some time, and vainly bellowing his name, the farmer was obliged to go without him.

Richard was in a very taciturn mood at the evening meal, and his uncle's announcement that Mrs. F. had inquired why he had

not come and remarked that she saw nothing of him nowadays did not render him more inclined for conversation. After supper, too, instead of smoking quietly, he sat fidgeting in his chair for a few minutes, and then, rising hastily, fell to pacing about the room.

'You seem mortal onaisy this evening,' remarked the farmer, after these perambulations had continued some time. 'Sit down, and light up like a decent Christian.'

He pushed forward a chair invitingly with his foot, and Richard took it and drew his pipe from his pocket.

Ugh! How hot and stuffy it was in this kitchen, where, in spite of the warm weather, a fire was blazing! The windows had not been opened all day, he felt sure; the odour of their recent repast still lingered in the air, mingled with the fumes of the particularly rank pipe which his uncle was then enjoying. He thought of the cool twilight without, of the downs with the fresh breeze blowing across them, of the path beside the hedge that led to Littlecomb, of the garden there—the garden where the thrush was singing, and where the roses and syringa were in full bloom. Ah, he could picture to himself the syringa with its white blossoms shining like pale lamps amid the dusky boughs. The garden still, and sweet, and dewy—where *she* was wandering at this hour!

'Light up, man,' said Isaac, pointing to Richard's pipe.

His nephew obeyed, but held it absently between his fingers.

Isaac poked the blazing logs with his foot and bent forward, extending his hands to the glow; his big red face looked unnaturally large through the surrounding haze of smoke. Richard half rose from his chair, and then sank back again. Outside, came the tantalising thought again, outside—a few paces away, were the downs and the lonely path through the fields, and then the garden.

The farmer was slowly nodding in the comfortable radiance. Richard's unused pipe had gone out. *The garden! The garden!*

Suddenly he rose from his chair, strode across the room, flung open the door, and was gone before his uncle had time to do more than turn his head.

CHAPTER VIII.

Away! The moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even:
Away! The gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.
Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away!

SHELLEY.

ONCE outside, Richard flew along as though pursued by a thousand demons; here were the downs, with their delicious tart air—but he raced across them without pausing to inhale it; now to swing over the hedge and to cover the ground that still lay between him and the garden. The garden and her! His heart was thumping loudly against his ribs; a sound as of a rushing sea was in his ears. On, on! There were the lights twinkling from under the dark eaves—there was the gate set in the high wall. How it shook beneath his violent hand as he flung it open! He stood still at last, hardly breathing in his suspense. Was she there? All was still save for the rustling of the boughs and the faint warbling of the birds—more than one was celebrating evensong to-night. What if she should not be there! He walked on, slowly and unsteadily now, and presently there was a movement amid the greenery close at hand. Out of a little arbour set amid the shrubs a figure came gliding forth to meet him. She paused two paces away from him and her hands fell by her sides.

'It is you?' she said, almost in a whisper.

'Yes, it is I.'

They stood facing each other in unbroken silence for a full minute, and then she asked, still in that breathless whisper:

'Why did you come?'

'Because I could not keep away.'

She turned and began slowly to pace down the path between the roses. Waves of perfume were wafted to their nostrils from the syringa blossom. Yes, yonder stood the bush just as he had pictured to himself. The remembrance suddenly flashed across Richard as he walked beside her that these shrubs were sometimes called 'Mock Orange Trees.' *Mock Orange Trees! Mock Orange Blossom!*—he must not pursue that thought further.

'I kept away for four days,' he said suddenly. 'I tried to keep away to-day.'

After a long pause she faltered:

'I was wondering why you did not come.'

He made no answer, and they walked in silence till the end of the path was reached, and then she said, still falteringly :

‘I don’t think you ought to have come now.’

‘I know I ought not!’

They turned and began to retrace their steps, but when about mid-way up the garden she came to a standstill and looked him full in the face.

‘Go now,’ she said. ‘Go! You must not stay here any longer.’

Even in the dim light he could see that she was pale and that her figure wavered; but he gazed at her as though without realising the sense of her words.

‘Will you not leave me,’ she entreated, ‘when I ask you?’

He stood looking at her stupidly for a moment or two longer; then the meaning of her request seemed to reach his understanding.

‘I will go,’ he said hoarsely, ‘if you will give me those flowers in your hand.’

‘How foolish you are!’ she cried. ‘There, yes, take them, and for Heaven’s sake go!’

She thrust them towards him, and he took them from her hand—a cluster of roses, moist and sweet. Instead of fulfilling his promise, however, he made a step closer to her.

‘Will you put them in my coat?’ he asked. His eyes in his haggard face seemed to burn.

‘No,’ said Rosalie, drawing back.

The movement and the icy tone that accompanied it recalled him to himself. He, too, drew back, hesitated, and then, throwing the flowers on the ground with a passionate gesture, departed. Back again through the gate, across the yard, under the lea of the hedge, over the downs.

Here was home; there was the warm light of the fire by which his uncle sat. Now the door was open, and he stood once more in his presence; now, he, Richard, would be forced to look him in the face.

For a moment he stood with the door-handle in his hand, and then, as the old man turned to smile inquiringly upon him, he suddenly wheeled and fled.

‘I can’t,’ he cried, as he mounted the stairs. ‘I can’t!’

Isaac stared at the closed door for some moments as though expecting it to open again, then, slowly turning back to the fire, listened.

In the room overhead hasty steps were walking up and down. 'He be gone to fetch summat, very like,' remarked the farmer as he restored his pipe to his mouth. But after smoking and listening a little longer, and marking that the pacing to and fro continued without intermission, he jerked his thumb upwards, nodded, and said, 'He bain't a-comin' back.' Then, after pausing a moment to ruminate over this circumstance, he made up his mind to the inevitable, tapped his pipe upon the hob, extinguished the lamp, and went upstairs to bed.

And long after he was sunk in dreamless slumbers those hasty footsteps might have been heard in the adjoining room, pacing up and down, up and down, like the restless tread of a caged beast.

Richard was not the only one who spent an unquiet night. Rosalie, too, could find no rest for her aching heart. After some hours of feverish tossing she rose, dressed in the dim grey light that was just stealing over the world, and seated herself by the open window. She could meditate here without risk of being disturbed, for the sun would not rise for an hour and more; and even the earliest of her men would not appear until some time after dawn.

With her chin resting on her hand, she hearkened vaguely to the succession of sounds which betokened the awakening of Nature. The cock had crowed long before she had left her uneasy pillow; the young sparrows had been chirping while she had clothed her weary frame; but now the cuckoo's note was sounding faintly from a neighbouring copse, and the starlings were chattering in their nests on the ivied wall. The grey veil was being gradually withdrawn from the face of the earth, but even yet familiar objects were only half revealed, and the most well known had a strange and unreal look.

The first sunbeam had not yet struck across the sky when Rosalie, whose eyes had been absently fixed upon the irregular line of hedge which marked the approach to the barton, saw a dark object moving slowly along it, and presently into the open space before her gate there stepped the figure of a man. She knew what man it was even before he had vaulted the locked gate and taken up his stand beneath her window. She would have given worlds to close this window and hasten out of sight, but a spell seemed to be laid upon her, and she could neither move nor speak, only gaze downward with dilated frightened eyes.

'You are there?' said Richard, looking up with a face as

drawn and white as her own. 'Thank God! I wanted to see you before I go. I wanted to say Good-bye.'

The power of speech returned to her, and she leaned forth impulsively with a faint cry. 'Going! You are going?'

'Yes, I am going. Is it not the only thing I can do? Do you think I can bear to sit at his table and take his pay, and know that I am a traitor to him in my heart?'

Rosalie did not speak; but Richard, gazing upwards, saw the clasp of her hands tighten, as they rested on the sill, till the nails and knuckles showed white.

He went on passionately: 'Every word he says to me stabs me. Every time I look at his honest, unsuspecting face I feel—surely you must know what I feel! I'm not quite a brute yet! And later, when you are his wife—do you think it would be possible for me to go on living within a stone's throw—to see you every day—to keep up the farce of friendship? What do you think I am made of?'

Her face was set like marble; only the eyes moved. After a long pause she whispered:

'Will you—ever come back?'

'Who knows?' he answered with a harsh laugh. 'Some time perhaps—when I am quite old—when I can no longer feel.'

She put her hand before her eyes, and then let it drop. Richard saw the irrepressible anguish in them, and his face changed. He threw up his arms suddenly with a kind of a sob:

'I will not go—if you tell me to stay!'

For a moment longer the agonised eyes looked down into his, and he thought he saw her waver; but it was only for a moment. Her lips moved, at first without emitting any sound, but presently mastering herself, she said firmly:

'No, I tell you to go—it is right for you to go.'

'Good-bye,' said Richard hoarsely.

'Good-bye,' faltered Rosalie; and then there came a great sob: 'God bless you!'

He turned as if to leave her, but, wheeling round, looked back.

'Am I to have nothing? Am I to be sent away without so much as a clasp of the hand?'

She had vanished from the window, and for a moment he stood holding his breath; would she come down to him—would she meet him at the door?

But within all was silent.

'She will not come,' he said to himself; and once more went

on his way, staggering blindly forward, with his head sunk upon his breast.

Had he looked back again he might have seen her creep to the window and kneel by it, straining her eyes through streaming tears.

Poor Rosalie! Poor Beauty! Did she wake at last only to look upon the vanishing form of her Prince?

Later in the day Isaac Sharpe came to Littlecomb in great perturbation of mind. He found Rosalie lying on the couch in the parlour, the blind being drawn down—she had a headache, she said.

'Dear heart alive!' said Isaac, sitting down, a hand on either knee. 'Everything d' seem to be goin' wrong this day! Here's my nevvie gone off wi' himself!'

'Gone?' echoed Rosalie, faintly, turning her face to the wall.

'Ees, took himself off this morning wi'out a word to anyone, and left this here bit of a note for to explain. I bain't much of a hand at letter readin', but Bithey did read it for me, and he doesn't seem to give no excuse at all, except that he were feelin' restless. He says he al'ays told me he were a rover, and couldn't settle down, and now the travellin' fit have come on him and he felt he must be off. And he thanks me very handsome, and he tells me he don't know where he be a-goin' to yet, but when he does he'll write and let me know where to send his luggage. And that's all.'

'That's all,' repeated Rosalie, looking at the kind, troubled old face with a bewildered stare. That was all, of course; and she had known it before. She had with her own eyes watched Richard's departing figure until it had disappeared from sight. She had known quite well that he would never return; she had even told him to go, agreed with him that it was the right and honourable thing to do—the only thing to do. Ever since the morning she had been telling herself so over and over again; yet none the less the farmer's words fell like a knell upon her heart.

'You do look bad, to be sure—I am sorry your head be so bad. Lard! Lard, what a world this be! I'm that upset I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels.'

The quaver in his voice smote Rosalie. She must make an effort to overcome her selfish grief; above all, to conquer that mad spirit of rebellion which every now and then rose rampant within her. This good man had need of her sympathy; should she not give it all the more willingly that there was so large an element

of remorse mingled with her misery? She sat up and looked affectionately towards him :

'I'm very, very sorry for you,' she said.

'Twas so sudden, ye see,' pursued Isaac dolefully. 'He never so much as said a word to I—never so much as hinted as he warn't satisfied. I mid ha' seen that the restless fit were a-comin' on if I hadn't ha' been sich a sammy. Restless! He were that restless last night, he were more like a dog at a fair as had lost his master nor a reasonable human being! It was up and down, and in and out the whole blessed evening. Ah, I be terrible upset; I be uncommon fond o' Richard, d'ye see. Always was from the time he were a little 'un. I was uncommon fond o' his mother afore him; she were the only woman I ever could put up wi'—present company excepted.'

As Isaac ducked his head towards her with a melancholy attempt at jocularly, Rosalie's heart sank lower still; she turned away hastily that he might not see her face. At an earlier period she might have been gratified by the knowledge that she was one of the few women in the world whom Isaac Sharpe could 'put up with'—phrases of the kind were his nearest approach to ardour, and indicated, as she knew, a considerable amount of solid attachment; but the passionate tones of Richard's voice had rung too recently in her ear—the look in his eyes was too fresh in her memory. Ah, what had she not seen in those eyes!

'Ees,' went on her unconscious future husband, 'ees, I'll be like to miss 'en; him and me was the best of friends—and that's not all. His leaving me like this be terrible illconvenient just now—'tis the busy time of year, d'ye see—haymaking time—every pair o' hands is wanted. Richard did very near the work o' two men; and he must go trapesing off wi' his self, giving me no time at all to find somebody to take his place.'

There was a distinct sense of injury in his tone now.

'I am sure he never thought of that,' cried Rosalie, quickly and resentfully. How could Isaac find it in his heart to think of such things in the face of the overwhelming fact that Richard was gone!

'Ah, sure he didn't,' agreed Isaac. "'Tis a very bad job! A very bad job indeed; but I suppose there baint nothing to be done.'

Rosalie agreed with a sigh. It was too true; there was nothing to be done.

(To be concluded.)

The Women of the Salons.

VII. MADAME RÉCAMIER.

IT takes perhaps a century for truth about a celebrity to be wound up from the bottom of its well. Madame Récamier has not yet been dead sixty years. Her biographies are the work of friends who wrote when they were still under the spell of her exquisite loveliness, or who were bound to her by the ties of kinship. The unfavourable criticisms on her are attributable to the jealousy of rivals. This last and least of the *Salonières* is therefore the most difficult to consider. She herself writes nothing—or practically nothing. From the enemies and the flatterers, therefore, and from chance allusions in contemporary memoirs and letters, one has to colour her picture as near to life as one can.

Jeanne Françoise Julie Adelaïde Bernard has, as she might be expected to have, a very handsome father and mother. M. Bernard is good-looking and stupid; but Madame, his wife, is lovely, shrewd, and businesslike.

The little creature born to them at Lyons on December 4, 1777, does not like any of those four fine Christian names, it appears, and elects to be called, or at any rate is called to the end of her life, Juliette. Juliette finds her first lover when she is about seven, and being educated by an aunt at Villefranche. The young gentleman is also about seven. The romance ends abruptly when Juliette is sent as a pupil to a certain convent of La Déserte, at Lyons. Years after she recalls, as in a 'vague sweet dream,' the calm convent garden, with its old-fashioned flowers, and the dim chapel, incense-scented, with its beautiful, mysterious rites, which have impressed children of a larger growth than Juliette for many centuries.

What she learns at the convent does not much transpire. She goes back to Paris and to her mother, who quickly perceives that

Juliette's fortune in life is to be made by her beauty. Beauty unadorned is not at all to the taste of an age when even a *Vigée le Brun* paints a *Marie Antoinette* with a structure on her head which would make a lesser loveliness entirely ridiculous; so, no doubt, *Madame Bernard* is right in compelling her little girl to give up many hours to her toilette, and to realise at the earliest possible period the necessity of applying oneself seriously to this gravest branch of female education.

It would not appear that Juliette is now or ever vain. She grows up with her beauty, as it were, from her infancy. She accepts it, calmly complacent. It is not a part of herself. It is her whole self. The little creature, sitting hours and hours in front of her looking-glass, is as used to her own loveliness as she is to the exceedingly injudicious compliments to which she is always listening at the parties to which gay papa and mama are continually taking her.

Once they take her to see the King and Queen dining, according to custom, in public at Versailles. The Queen notices the little Juliette. Her beauty always attracts attention, even a queen's, naturally and as a matter of course. She is the same age as *Madame Royale*. The children must be measured! Juliette is taken to the private apartments and measured with that other child, for whom Fate is preparing so widely different a destiny. Juliette is a little bit the taller. She is always, as it were, a little bit taller, a little bit lovelier, a little bit more charming, than any other woman. That is her career.

At home *Madame Bernard* gives her just such an education as will make her beauty yet more attractive. She is taught the harp and sings to it. She plays on the piano. When she is old she recalls that music of her youth, without notes, at twilight. She dances divinely. Does not one know, later, all about that shawl dance, which gives the *de Staël* one of the most charming scenes in her novels?

Juliette has the gayest early girlhood imaginable. There are innumerable parties at home. And abroad—theatres, concerts, a thousand things. It is 1791–92, and the Revolution is already at the gates. One may not be able to amuse oneself much longer. So much the more reason to be all the merrier while we can! With what an awful literalness in these times is that saying fulfilled, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.'

In that *Annus Mirabilis* 1793, a certain *M. Récamier* visits

very assiduously *chez* Bernard. M. Récamier is a banker, very handsome, very gay, very charming, with the most delightful manners and the kindest heart. It is not at all wonderful that he should fall in love with the spring beauty of Juliette Bernard. There is but one drawback. M. Récamier is five-and-forty, and Juliette is hardly older than that other Juliet of the house of Capulet of Verona.

It is an occasion on which one might suspect a case of tearful loveliness and obdurate, worldly parents. But such a suspicion would be unfounded. Juliette of Paris accepts the prosaic, elderly husband with that perfect equability which is to preserve her beauty long past an age when other women have wept theirs into wrinkles and crows' feet. It is destiny—and not a bad destiny. Let us take it philosophically! If Juliette of Paris cannot be called heartless, she has at least a very different order of heart from Juliet of Verona.

In the very thick of the Revolution, then, Mademoiselle Bernard becomes Madame Récamier. It is one of the tragedies or one of the alleviations of life, as one chooses to take it, that though one half of the world be dying, the other half must needs go on laughing, visiting, marrying, as under serener skies. M. Récamier sees many executions with his own eyes. His house and the Bernards' are protected by Barrère. Does his girl-wife at home tremble for the fate that has overtaken many she knows, and for fear it may overtake herself? Perhaps. Her life at first is a very secluded one. The ardour of the Salons even has been damped at last by so much blood. There are nothing but public entertainments now. In France it will take the Judgment Day to stop those. So behind the veil of enforced privacy Juliette Récamier's beauty rises to that dazzling loveliness before which all descriptions fail. Her biographers, indeed, speak of the exquisite complexion, the little rounded arms, the delicate figure, the clustering dark hair—and convey nothing. The great David paints her, and is driven to despair by a beauty no canvas can reproduce. Gérard has hardly more success. Later, Canova does her bust in marble. But what have marble and this warm, soft loveliness, with its tints of morning, in common with each other? If 'the best part of beauty is that which a picture cannot express,' Madame has that best part in an extraordinary degree. In the Louvre to-day thousands of people pass by her portrait unnoticed or disappointed. The sure testimony to the reality of her loveliness in life is the men who worship her and Paris who goes mad over it.

When the churches are opened again, Madame collects for a fashionable charity at St. Roch, and her impulsive countrymen get on the side altars, and perhaps swarm up the pillars, to look at her. She is no doubt serene, as always. Such a worship does not turn her head—perhaps hardly makes that calm heart beat quicker. It is pleasant to be adored indeed—nay, it is the only thing worth living for. It is the end of education. Is it possibly also the end of marriage with a man who will treat one in all respects as a father, and guard one sufficiently from the effects of those passions it is so pleasant and so dangerous to excite?

M. Récamier takes and furnishes with a royal splendour a house in the Rue du Blanc, belonging to M. Necker, where another *Salonnière*, much less calm and philosophic than Juliette, once held her Salon. The *Maison Récamier* is rising in the world. Beauty is a very long ladder to success, as everyone knows. In 1799 Madame meets for the first time, at a dinner party, twenty-four-year-old Lucien Bonaparte, very vain, very fatuous, very susceptible, but with an adorable boyish smile. He falls in love with her. That goes without saying. Does she object to the infatuation? Lucien is the First Consul's brother. He writes her a most passionate, absurd, simple letter. The lovely Madame has a little inspiration; treats it as an essay in novel-writing, and hands it back to the devout lover, in public, advising him to devote his talents to better things. She is only the more charming when she is cruel. It is hardly necessary to say that the distracted Lucien writes more letters. He signs himself Romeo. He is dreadfully romantic and emphatic and young. Juliette gets a little frightened and tells her husband the story. Lucien must be forbidden the house! And M. Récamier, with the easy optimism of his character, or the lax morality of the time, or with shrewd business instincts (or with a little of all three feelings, perhaps), replies that he can't offend the brother of General Bonaparte, and that though Madame must 'grant him nothing,' she must not drive him to despair. Poor Lucien! He suffers himself to be made a fool of for a year perhaps. Before that year is over the First Consul himself has condescended to admire Madame's loveliness, and presently tries to get its omnipotent influence on his own side by offering her an appointment, which she refuses, as lady-in-waiting to the Empress.

M. Récamier's bank has been getting for some time into a

very embarrassed condition. It happens at last that unless the Bank of France will advance a million the Bank Récamier must stop payment. With Fate's fine sense of the picturesque, there is a great dinner party *chez Récamier* the very evening husband and wife are waiting the decision on which depends their fortune—perhaps the fortune of their lives. The strain is too great for pleasant M. Récamier. He flies to the country. It is Madame who receives the guests, exquisitely dressed and smiling—tranquilly apologising, no doubt, for Monsieur's absence, listening with a like divine sympathy to the tittle-tattle of the hour or the best talk in Paris. The crash falls the next day. Madame takes ruin very pluckily. She sells her fine dresses and her jewels, parts with the gorgeous plate, and finally sells the house in the Rue du Blanc. Her philosophy is admirable. Yet there is that in it which forces one more and more into the belief that she never feels any misfortune deeply, and owes part of her courage to that insensibility. It is to the credit of impulsive Paris that when its beauty becomes beauty in distress it falls at her feet, worships her, weeps for her, respects her, and loves her a thousand times more than ever.

Madame Bernard dies in 1807, 'becomingly dressed' to the end. In the summer of the same year Madame Récamier visits the de Staël at Coppet. These two women have for each other the attraction of opposites. Juliette is dowered with the beauty for which the de Staël longs, and the de Staël with the intellect Juliette must find it so difficult to do without. Corinne speaks of her friend as 'that beautiful person who has received the worship of all Europe, and who has never forsaken an unhappy friend;' and it is as she kneels, weeping, at the de Staël's death-bed, that Madame Récamier first meets the most powerful influence of her life, Chateaubriand.

That summer at Coppet is not a little eventful. Prince Augustus of Prussia is among the de Staël's guests, and falls straightway head over ears in love with Juliette's exquisite face and girlish airs of timidity. He is an impulsive person, this Prince. He is not content to worship—a devotee before a passionless statue who will accept the most burning devotion, and give in return a perfect smile and the touch of a marble hand. There is only one thing between us! Juliette must get a divorce from her husband. It is characteristic of the morality of the time that this proposal is not taken at all as an insult. Juliette's cool blood has been warmed ever so little by the lover's ardour. 'Three

months passed away,' says her partial biographer, who can see nothing but good in her conduct, 'in the enchantments of a passion by which Madame Récamier was deeply touched, if she did not share it.' His hostess is the Prince's 'eloquent advocate.' At last Juliette asks her husband to grant her a divorce. It is said that the generosity of his answer moves her to reconsider her request, but it is not unfair to suppose that she is also moved by the consideration of the inconveniences that divorce would bring upon herself, and by a true Parisian's horror of living out of Paris. She goes back there with her mind made up to stay with her husband, and leaves her Prince to think 'of a happiness which must surpass all the most delicious dreams of the imagination,' and to 'confidently expect' she will become his wife. From Paris she sends him her portrait, and complacently receives his rapturous love-letters. When she at last writes to him plainly, the news falls upon him, he may well say, 'like a thunderbolt.' She consents to see him every now and then during her life—that he may not quite forget how to love her—and has never an idea for a moment that her conduct is not completely generous and noble.

In 1811 Madame is exiled for visiting the de Staël at Coppet. She travels in Italy, sees Canova at Rome, and at the fall of Napoleon returns to Paris and starts her Salon under the Bourbons.

This Salon would appear to differ widely from any of its predecessors. People do not come here to listen to its mistress's wit, to meet each other, nor—most potent of all attractions—to hear their own voices. They come to look at a woman's loveliness. Juliette sits on her throne to be worshipped. That dazzling complexion, the long lashes on the exquisite cheek, the little curls on the clear forehead, red lips, dimpled arms, milk-white skin—with such possessions as these what need has a woman of cleverness? The *habitués* of her rooms are her lovers. Three generations of the Montmorencies adore her. It is Adrien de Montmorency who says of the impression that she makes on her contemporaries 'they did not all die of it, but were all wounded.' A lover does not want wit in his mistress, or only just so much wit as will enable her to admire his. Madame has at least enough cleverness to manage her Salon without any. There is hardly a *bon mot* recorded of her. If she said anything it might be the wrong thing. She herself suspects that, or knows it. Sometimes she puts her handkerchief to her mouth to stop a burst of the most naïve girlish laughter. She feels, indeed, with that sound and

curious intuition often given to stupid women and rarely to stupid men, that beauty alone will not, in a vulgar phrase, run a Salon, and uses hers to attract and chain to her such various cleverness as that of a Chateaubriand, a Benjamin Constant, a Bernadotte, and a Canova. The last of the *Salonières* has as little in common with the caustic wit of a du Deffand, which brings all famous Paris to worship at the shrine of an old blind woman, as she has with the passionate sympathies of a Lespinasse, who has no need of beauty to make men love her. She is as far from the tranquil motherliness of a Madame Geoffrin as she is from the ardent conscientiousness of a Madame Necker, and has a prudent outward respectability entirely unknown to the careless lightness of a 'black-locked d'Epinay.'

When a further reverse of fortune involves the loss of most of her own money as well as of M. Récamier's, she separates from him and goes to live in a 'cell' in the Abbaye-aux-Bois. The cell is a Salon at once. It is, in reality, only a bedchamber furnished with a harp, a piano, a bookcase, a portrait of the de Staël, and a view of Coppet by moonlight.

It is part of the tact and delightfulness of a French woman—and perhaps of Madame Récamier above all French women—that she is as serene and easy here as in a palace. Presently she is able to take a larger suite of rooms in the same house, and receives there the Duchess of Devonshire, Sir Humphry and Lady Davy, the Earl of Bristol, Maria Edgeworth, Humboldt, Miss Berry, and hears read aloud before their publication the *Méditations* of Lamartine.

But the first *habitué* of her Salon, as well as the first influence of her life, is Chateaubriand. Her relations to this man are frankly set down by some people as infamous and as hotly defended by others as innocent. Perhaps the truth lies between these two extremes. M. Chateaubriand begins as a kind of *ami de la maison*: as a worshipper of a loveliness all Paris worships too. But there does not seem much doubt that, in spite of the existence of a Madame Chateaubriand, he very soon wishes to be more than Madame Récamier's friend. It is entirely characteristic of Juliette that she delightedly receives letters from him which have all the warmth of love-letters, and does not find it inconsistent with her honour to be told 'To be with you is the only good thing.' 'To be loved by you, to live in a little retreat with you and a few books, is the desire of my heart and the goal of all my wishes.' In brief, Juliette loves this man's love—until

his love demands the sacrifice of outward respectability and of the homage even a bad world pays to a good woman. When, like Lucien and Augustus, he asks proof of her affection she draws back. She finds it necessary to take a trip abroad. On her return she is able to feel that Heaven has 'blessed her self-imposed sacrifice, and that henceforward the friendship of M. Chateaubriand would be as she wished it . . . calm as a good conscience and pure as virtue.' Virtue! Well, perhaps. Madame's conduct may be summed up as never disreputable and always mean.

During those winters in Rome she has met there Queen Hortense, Madame Mère, her old lover Lucien, and the Princess Borghèse.

When Chateaubriand is made ambassador to the Eternal City, he, and Madame in Paris, exchange many tender letters. M. Récamier dies presently at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, his wife's Salon being given up to him. Their relations are quite friendly. Madame's exquisite serenity is very little disturbed. It is part of her charm that she is always sweet, cool, and patient. She goes to Dieppe presently, the ozone of a gay watering-place being then, as now, a very favourite and effectual panacea for the afflictions of the feminine soul. In 1832 she again leaves Paris, to escape the horrors of the cholera year.

By now Madame is getting old and failing in health. Her friends, Chateaubriand and Ballanche, are no stronger than she is. When, in 1841, she makes what may be called her last great public appearance, at the subscription soirée she gets up for the sufferers from the floods of the Rhone and Saone, she is sixty-four years old.

The scene should be immortalised on canvas. Here is Chateaubriand doing the honours of the Salon, and accepted according to long custom as its host. Madame Rachel is acting. Garia, Rubini, and Lablache give their services. Here gather the wit and fashion of that Paris which, since it worshipped Juliette's girl loveliness of milk and roses, has been through such disasters, anarchies, triumphs, horrors, chaos as are not compressed into the history of another city in hundreds of years. The *Salonidre* has still something of that loveliness which made men mad. As when one puts a hand into a jar of pot-pourri one sees again the rose, the garden, and the summer, so this woman keeps to the last the divine fragrance of beauty. Care has scored few wrinkles on the face. The heat of passions has not seared it; the thousand emotions, hopes, fears, tendernesses of one absorbing affection

have not written a history in the eyes nor drawn pathetic lines about the mouth. Juliette has still her calm, sweet smile, her easy grace of manner. She has 'resigned herself to the first touch of time.' She is not desperately trying to remedy the failings of old age by art. She is never desperate about anything. When a friend, who has not seen her for a long time, compliments her on her looks, 'Ah,' she replies, 'I do not deceive myself. From the moment I noticed the little Savoyards in the streets no longer turned to look at me, I knew all was over.' But to-night is a rejuvenation. It is the swan song of the loveliness which is this *Salonnière's métier*; it is the swan song of the Salon itself. After this Madame is seen in public no more. Chateaubriand is much with her. Her beautiful eyes are attacked by a cataract, and she becomes almost entirely blind.

In 1847 Ballanche dies and Madame Chateaubriand. Chateaubriand asks Madame Récamier to marry him. She refuses. 'Let us change nothing,' she says, 'in so perfect an affection.' She is present at his death—still quite composed—in 1848. Less than a year after she dies herself, of the cholera which she has always so greatly dreaded. Even that pitiless complaint leaves her beautiful. She lies like an exquisite statue, and Achille Deveria traces from her dead loveliness that *esquisse fidèle* which expresses 'suffering and repose.'

The chief events of Madame Récamier's life have been noted to very little purpose if her character has not been seen through them. One's life is only a theatre to display one's nature, after all; and what we do is what we are.

Juliette of Paris is one of the women who receive of the gods the two gifts of a perfect beauty and a perfect tact, which are often given in place of all else, and which, from a social point of view, are in themselves all sufficient.

They suffice, at least, to make Madame Récamier the idol of her generation, 'the fate of the Montmorencies,' and the adored of a Bernadotte, a Chateaubriand, a Canova, a Ballanche. There is such a divine sympathy in her smile, her manners, her beauty, that that deeper sympathy which comes either from having suffered, or from being capable of suffering, a like sorrow to that of which she is hearing, seems hardly necessary. If she is a tepid mistress, she is a very gentle friend. There is no occasion on record in which she is not serene, modest, pleasing, and perfectly even in temper. 'That which she does not like does not exist for her.' She is constant in her friendships. Change and

tempest are hateful to her. It is not a little noteworthy that the lives which are written of her are not lives of Madame Récamier, but disjointed biographies of Chateaubriand, Montmorency, and Ballanche. There is so little to say about Madame! She writes very few letters even, in that fine little hand. She has a kind of intellectual timidity, not a little charming—and safe. She seems as if she were always saying, ‘*Look at me.* In that lies my strength and your weakness.’

As a lover, Juliette wants the admiration of all. If she was ever capable of a great passion she fritters away that capacity in those delightfully perilous flirtations with her princes and her authors. But that capacity, if it does not demand a great intellect, demands a great nature, a power of absorption in one aim, self-devotion, not seldom self-immolation. Madame has none of these things.

Her morals, which a present generation is apt too hastily to condemn from a very vague hearsay, seem rather to have lived on the border of immorality than to have crossed it. As she is too cool for passion, she is too prudent for sin.

It is not unmeet that the Salon itself, as an institution, should die with a Récamier. It begins as an intellectual power. When it has declined into a court of beauty, its end must needs be near. Since the days that the Rambouillet gathers round her all the stars of the intellectual firmament, and lights her rooms with the spiritual fire of a Fénelon and the flaming eloquence of a Bossuet, it has indeed passed through a hundred changes. It has nourished in its breast the Free Thought which, put into action, is to emancipate men's bodies from the misery and oppression of a thousand years and their minds from a hundred priestly delusions. It has been alternately a school of wit and an arena for the discussion of the deepest problems of the soul—fate, freewill, death, eternity. It has brought to birth more *bon mots*, epigrams, madrigals, fantasias than have been produced by any other society at any other time. Under its fostering care a little shoot of an Encyclopædia grows into a tree whose branches reach to all lands. It is a playground for the light loves of a d'Houdetot, a Saint-Lambert, a d'Epinay, a Mademoiselle d'Ette. It encourages the virile vigour of a de Staël and the brilliant timidity of a d'Alembert. No social function in history can boast members a hundredth part as distinguished. Not content with a Rousseau and a Voltaire, a Diderot and a Duclos, it attracts from other

nations a Grimm and a Holbach, a Hume, a Gibbon, and a Walpole.

That it polishes manners and brings to an exquisite refinement the courtesies and little social tendernesses of daily life is not perhaps much, but it is something.

It gives an extraordinary impetus to book-writing. It floods the world with memoirs which are become history. It produces some of the best letters ever written. It is the direct origin of innumerable poems. It inspires masterpieces and corrects them. Its effect on the *Encyclopædia* alone would make it a literary influence without rival in the history of the world.

But it is as a moral anomaly that it is most remarkable. Here men and women, 'whose chief ambition it was to excel in corruption and to be fancifully original in sin,' are the first to discuss that purer morality and generous philanthropy which are the boast of the world to-day. The Rights of Men are first realised by the people who most tread them under foot. The Revolution is brought about by the class whom it first turns and rends.

The uses of the Salon are over, and so the Salon itself is no more.

It is not a good man who lies dead. It is rather a bad man who has wrought much good. It were unjust to remember that his morals were the morals of his age, and to forget that he originated ideas far in advance of it. So to this brilliant talker, with his light life and fruitful thought, be peace.

S. G. TALLENTYRE.

A Stone Eagle.

HIGH on the moss-grown wall, serene, austere,
 Intent, I see the great stone eagle stand,
 Fashioned in what dim, unremembered year
 By what forgotten hand?

Blue sea and blue sky
 And green lands about me
 (How the silver splinters fly!),
 Happy world, if I should die,
 Could you laugh without me?

Blue beneath and blue above
 And purple hills behind me
 (Lamb for Erne, for falcon dove),
 Foolish world of death and love,
 Spin and never mind me!

Summer by summer the laburnum flings
 Her perfumed wealth of gold about his feet,
 And on his head the happy mavis sings
 A love song, clear and sweet.

Now the merry birds begin,
 Merle and mavis, lark and linnet;
 Not a bush of golden whin
 But shall hide a song within it.
 Not a cloud that floats above
 But some silver strain shall capture;
 Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love, 'tis love
 Thrills the laughing world with rapture.

He heeds them not: silent, inscrutable
 Through the long years unchanged he gazes forth,
 Held waiting there by some unspoken spell
 Of the mysterious North.

To the heart that is dead to desire,
To eyes that have looked upon death,
To hands that have handled the fire,
To lips that have caught the sea's breath,
One calls from the silence and saith :—
' By the stone that was sand, that was life
Ere Time had grown old ; by the skaith
Of water and winter and strife,
I have stricken from life into sand,
I have moulded from sand into stone ;
The spell is upon thee to stand
Through the ages to wait me, alone.'

Does he remember the brave days of old,
When the long ships in all their proud array,
With Vikings clad in scarlet and in gold,
Came sailing up the bay ?

Still as the changing seasons run
We turn our hopes, our hearts, our eyes
Southward to summer and the sun,
To milder airs and softer skies.
Forgetting whence our fathers came,
No more we know to read aright
The mystic lights that flare and flame
Across the jewelled breast of night.
Still are the Northman's sails unfurled,
But lost the light that fired his soul ;
Where once he swept with fear the world
He trades in timber and in coal.

We come and hold and pass, but not as these
With wind of battle shrilling in their wings,
Dark with the smoke of blazing fortresses,
Heaped with the spoil of kings.

O ! to win back for an hour
The beauty, the passion, the power
Of the days when the fierce sea lords
In the midst of the battle sang ;
While over and round them rang
The swift sweet music of swords.

A STONE EAGLE.

When the flag of the North was cast
 Afar on the Southland blast,
 And the raven of Odin flew
 In the van of the watery war,
 Where the blue-eyed children of Thor
 Shouted and sang as they slew.

The white sea leaps and cries
 Aloud to the voiceless skies
 In days that are fallen dumb.
 'Hushed the shouting, the song
 Of my sons who were fair and strong,
 Is there never a man to come?'

We are to him as leaves of Summer, blown
 Upon the winds of Autumn year by year,
 From the unknown brought forth, in the unknown
 Too soon to disappear.

The birds that come with Spring
 About our gardens flying,
 Too soon they cease to sing,
 Southward their way they wing
 And leave sweet Summer dying;
 With them, with them departs
 The summer of our hearts;
 Time, whom we were defying,
 Comes at our challenging
 And turns our songs to sighing.

How came he here, Jove's eagle, in the land
 Where Odin's ravens flew? Whence had he flown
 Who sits by some foul island warlock's hand
 Struck into sudden stone?

When morning's gold came stealing
 Along the silver sky,
 Above the mountain sheiling.
 When morning's gold came stealing,
 In widening circles wheeling,
 How glorious 'twas to fly,
 When morning's gold came stealing
 Along the silver sky.

The Lord of lonely valleys,
The monarch of the mist,
I leave my cloud-swept palace.
The Lord of lonely valleys,
No more in splendid sallies
To sweep where e'er I list,
The Lord of lonely valleys,
The monarch of the mist.

Is all the wisdom of the ages pent
Within him, waiting but reviving breath?
Incarnate power, for ever impotent,
Eternal life-in-death!

Here on the verge of the land
Alone in the night I stand,
And the wild sea sings at my feet.
Far off, on the breast of the night,
A low, green glimmer of light
Where the sky and the waters meet.

Naught between earth and sky
Save the wind and the sea and I.
We three in the night alone:
They two mighty and strong,
Singing their world-old song,
And the heart in me struck to stone.

Ere ever there were gods of Greece or Rome
High on these cliffs the eagle's nest was set.
On those dim hills the ravens had their home
When Odin was not yet.

The isles that shook to Odin's spear
Nor Zeus nor Jove e'er owned as god.
What do the Roman eagles here
Where Roman legions never trod?
Long ere across the quiet bay
Their keels the Viking longships drew,
The eagles screamed above the fray,
The ravens to the slaughter flew.

A STONE EAGLE.

Here, when rose man's first altar flame,
The raven croaked, the eagle yelled ;
And still their ancient right they claim
By claw and beak and talon held.

Still in the silence of long winter nights
The well-remembered voices shake his soul,
The screaming of the eagles on the heights,
The sea's deep thunder-roll.

D. J. ROBERTSON.

Abel's Susanna.

THE Reverend Joseph Trigger was a young man, and the parish, which was magnanimous—for it had only known one vicar in forty years—thought no worse of him for it. The unfortunate thing, however, about the Reverend Joseph was not so much his age, or rather lack of age, as the fact that a creative Providence, while blending many estimable qualities in his composition, had curiously omitted the least suspicion of humour.

Westleigh deplored the omission—not certainly in so many words, for Westleigh folk never realised quite what was missing in their new vicar; like all innately humorous beings they were unconscious, to a great extent, of its existence in themselves.

They shook their heads, and ‘reckoned thickey young passon chap didn’t clap on to things jest to once, but there, he’ve got plenty o’ time to larn in, so he hev!’

The Reverend Joseph was zealous, and by no means afraid of work; he set to work, in truth, with celerity, before Westleigh could turn round (Westleigh, who thought of a new scheme at least a year, then considered it for another, and gave it serious attention for a third, before taking what Joshua Snell, the sexton, grandiloquently called ‘definite steps’!) I repeat, the Reverend Joseph established guilds and unions, classes and meetings before Westleigh could turn round.

‘Reg’lar dapper!’ ejaculated the parish, wondering whether it liked these sudden innovations in its parochial life.

‘Stagnation, absolute stagnation in spiritual matters,’ wrote the new vicar to his mother. ‘I am endeavouring to infuse a little vitality into our corporate life, but it is a superhuman task.’ He never used a simple word when a difficult one was at hand.

He was a well-meaning, earnest young priest, and the parish, although somewhat scornful of the very obvious efforts taken for its regeneration, awaited events with dispassionate calm.

‘I go to seek my people at their daily work. I am no believer in stiff, ceremonial visits from a clergyman, when all

are unnatural and stilted. I want to get at their daily life and thought, amid their everyday toil, to understand them from their own level, by their own methods.' It was a pleasing idea, the vicar thought it a brilliantly original one, and he repeated it often, with a supreme belief in its efficacy.

He said it to Mrs. Pinson, the schoolmaster's wife, as he paid an inconvenient morning call on that good lady.

'Yes, certainly, I quite agree,' she assented feebly, with a fearful thought towards the plum cake, which at that very moment was probably being burnt to a cinder without her watchful care.

'You see, one can get at people better, they have not got time to put on a mask to disguise their real feelings.'

Mrs. Pinson thought it might be a little uncomfortable for the ill-timed visitor to discover all that was in his victim's mind.

The Reverend Joseph was not easily dismayed, nor observant enough to see that his presence was sometimes a decided nuisance; so he went cheerfully on with his plans, calling in at the forge and conversing disjointedly in the efforts of dodging the shower of sparks that old Matthew seemed to send forth with marvellous energy when he was by.

'If that there young feller dawn't git blinded one o' these days, why, my name ain't Matthew Southcott! In 'ee comes as affable as you please, and sets hisself down on thickey bench, wi' his swaller-tails a-lickin' the dust, and clatters away till I be fair mazed like, an' can scarce tell if I be a-makin' o' a poker or a plough. Law bless 'ee, what questions 'ee do ask too, as a babe in arms might know! Well, there, I reckon so much readin' an' book-larnin' like fair addles a man's head fer sense an' understandin'!'

It was lucky for the young man's ease of mind that he never as much as guessed these unvarnished criticisms, for the visits were also somewhat of a mortification of the flesh to himself, breaking in destructively on the many studies and quiet readings that his priestly soul yearned over. This morning he put them resolutely aside, and strode forth to 'his flock' (Westleigh, by the way, resented that appellation for itself, thinking it almost ungodly). The idea of an outing on Easter Monday for the ringers' guild was uppermost in his mind.

It was a day in late March, one of those perfect, cloudless, balmy days that, in the West, give an early foretaste of spring,

seeming almost snatched from spring itself, full of sunshine, budding, and promise.

The blue sky stretched above his unheeding head; the trill of birds from the bushes at the roadside never as much as disturbed for an instant the calculations of his arrangements as he walked on.

In some way, though, the beauty wrought upon his senses, wrought unconsciously, as beauty will when poor humanity is deaf and blind, for he felt a sudden thrill of satisfaction, of pleasure in his work. He thought it was occasioned by the prospect of the ringers' outing; he was nothing of a psychologist, and would have been horrified to realise that his mental and moral horizon were rendered happy by a bird's song and a sapphire sky. He had a practical mind and scanty imagination, but yet a little of the latter quality, though he knew it not, nor desired its possession.

'Good morning, Abel. You are one of the very men I am wanting to see.'

'Mornin', zur; mortal fine day.' Abel stopped in his occupation of hedge-trimming as the parson halted. Abel was one of the ringers whose pleasure outing was at the moment occupying all that parson's thoughts.

'It is, indeed, very favourable weather, very favourable.' The Reverend Joseph then laid bare his plans to Abel with regard to the ringers. They were listened to in silence, and when the young man stopped, Abel pulled off his cap and scratched his head in meditation, before committing himself to an answer.

'Well, to be zure, it do zound temptin' like, zo it do. Us ain't never had no sich thing afore, not in thees parish. I ain't a-bin in train more'n twice meself, wance to the 'ospital and wance to Susanna's sister's burying, nayther zackly pleasurin's, as yü might zay.'

'I am glad you are pleased at the prospect, Abel. I thought of a day by the sea; there is so much to be learnt from the great works of nature.' All the while a little 'work of nature,' a black-bird, sang its heart out in the elm across the road as they talked.

'Ees, fay, I'd be plazed enough, but I reckon as yü'll hev to do wi'out my company thickey day, zur.' Abel grinned uneasily, and made an ineffective swish at an adjacent twig. He had a small, puckered face, with stubbly side whiskers of sandy hue, and a general expression of mild submission, which his manner did not belie.

'Nonsense, Abel, nonsense; your master will give you a day off at Easter. I will promise to see to that all right; I'll go and approach him myself about it.'

'I dawn't go fer to zay as the maister 'ud be agin a day off casual; 'ee 'ud gie a day, I dessay. Yü zee, 'tis like this: the missus her dawn't 'old wi' pleasin' much, her worketh mortal 'ard, do Susanna. I ain't gwine to zay a word agin 'er, but zeems as her's reg'lar zot agin 'olidayin', alwez was from a maid, never didn't care for fairs or naught, reg'lar zot agin it.'

Abel shook his head disconsolately, with a sense of finality in his own observations.

The parson spoke impatiently; it irritated him even to consider that his excellent benevolence might be frustrated by a woman's irrational objection (he had small experience in the sex, and ignorantly held their influence lightly).

'Ah, we will conquer that little prejudice together, Abel, we will conquer that.'

Abel had a somewhat vague idea what prejudice might mean exactly, but nevertheless a deep conviction, born of hard experience, that the man who set about conquering Susanna would find all his work cut out, as he phrased it to himself.

'It will never do for us to be under petticoat rule, Abel, it won't do at all! I'm going round your way; I'll look in and see how the land lies.' The parson swung off down the road, getting over the ground quickly with his long legs, that seemed to give one the impression of being recent acquisitions, to the skilful use of which their owner was not as yet quite accustomed.

Abel regarded the departing figure with shrewd, sad eyes.

'I reckon 'ee hev got a deal to larn yet, ay, a goodish bit where women-folk be concerned,' with which oracular remark he expectorated gravely into the palm of each hand, and resumed his hedging operations forthwith.

It was Monday morning, therefore, as anybody in Westleigh might know, washing morning, and when Susanna Cann caught sight of a black coat and hat over the privet hedge, on which she was carefully spreading a long row of small garments to dry, she uttered a fervent wish that 'passon worn't comin' a-hinderin' the second streamin' o' fine things.'

The garden gate clashed to, and the sound of quick feet along the path soon showed Susanna the futility of her hopes, so with a sigh of resignation she took her hands from the tub, and,

poising a heavy basket of clothes ready for drying on her hip, went out to the front.

'Mornin', zur; yü'll be zo kind as to scuse me; I be jest in the thick o' washin', which wi' chillun, an' a man, makes a purty tidy bit o' work for one pair o' hands to git through, I can tell 'ee.'

'Of course, of course; pray don't let me interrupt, Mrs. Cann. I thought I would just look in on you. I know with a family like yours you must have plenty of work. Please don't let me interrupt you; I will take a seat in the porch; the sun is quite strong this morning.' The long legs stumbled over a bag of clothes pegs as their owner subsided into the narrow bench that ran each side of the whitewashed porch.

Susanna took him at his word, and went on calmly shaking out and hanging up, one after the other, the wet raiment piled in the basket by her side. She was a comely woman, with more than a trace remaining of the good looks that had once made her the beauty of the parish; fresh air and healthy work had done little to spoil the fine features and glossy hair, though there were lines on the strong face that would have told a closer observer than the Reverend Joseph that the way Susanna liked best (in fact, the only way that usually commended itself to her taste) was Susanna's own!

She hung up a long line full of damp clothes that flapped about, many of them garments from which the vicar modestly averted his gaze. Susanna got to the end of her basket, and with a despairing glance at the still immovable figure, that showed no signs of departure, or her own imminent return to the 'streamin's,' listened with as much patience as she could muster to 'passon's tellin'.

'I have just been talking to Abel about a little plan of mine for taking the ringers away at Easter. I propose——'

'Takin' the ringers away? An' what be gwine to do wi' 'em when you've took 'em? Bless my 'eart, zur, I should like to know who would be wantin' they.'

'You don't understand, I am afraid; I am referring to an outing, a short trip together, such as is so general in every parish now. "All work and no play;" you know the old adage.'

'Outin'? Very agreeable, I'm shure, fer they as hev got naught else to do than trapesin' like a pack o' gipsies about the country, very pleasant! A-spendin' hard-earned wages, as hev got more ways o' going a'ready than a donkey got tricks. 'Ees, I've heerd

tell o' sich fulishness, but that's alwez to find fer the seekin' on—fules is a race wi' a long family, as my old vayther used to zay.'

The vicar admitted to himself that the outlook was not encouraging, and that Abel's prognostications were certainly justified, as far as Susanna's views on the subject of holiday-making were concerned.

'Come, come, Mrs. Cann, you are a little hard, you know; times have changed since your youth, changed considerably.'

'Yü be right there, zur, they be changed, an' not fer the better, to my way o' thinkin'. Time was when workin' volk was workin' volk, wi'out a-tryin' to ape the gentry, as only laughs in their sleeves at 'em. Outin' indade, an' 'oliday-makin'! Mighty pleasant, no doubt, to be dravin' in carriage an' pair, but us ain't all born to it, worse luck.'

Susanna wiped her wet hands on a corner of her apron, with an action of almost dramatic scorn.

It was decidedly awkward. The young cleric thought sympathetically of the Apostle, and his many admonitions against the sex. His was evidently advice from the fruit of sad experience with contumacious 'weaker vessels,' though he fancied St. Paul himself would have applied another adjective to Susanna.

'It ain't fer me to stop Abel goin', ef 'ee is a-minded to; men be fer all the world zame as a flock o' sheep, one a-follerin' t'other, no matter where.'

'That's right. I knew you would take a sensible view of it when you got used to the idea.' His spirits rose.

'I'd jest about like to know where the sense comes in. No, zur, Abel can go an' willin', but ef 'ee do I shall find out 'ow much sense to credit 'un wi' fer the rest o' 'ees days. A man here eight-an'-thirty come nex' Whitsun, wi' chillun to be put out in life an' done fer, a-talkin' o' sich child's play, jest 'cause 'ee 'appens to lay 'old to a bell-rope twice a Sunday, an' once weeken-time dawn't tell me! Beg yer pardon, zur, but it reg'lar mazes me to heer sich nonsense.'

The vicar betook himself home with dejected mien.

'It is so difficult to gain a hold of the bucolic character; it is hide-bound in worn-out convention and custom, and I find desirable and beneficial changes most hard to initiate.' His mother sighed over her devoted son's parochial trials and unappreciative congregation, marvelling that his zealous efforts should meet with no more encouragement.

The preparations for the Easter outing went on apace, despite

Abel's inability to take part; but that same inability seemed to the vicar to be a blemish on the whole proceeding, caused as it was by what he termed the 'narrow obstinacy of a woman.'

'It is not, Abel, as though it were any serious conscientious objection; then I should be the very last to say anything against her wishes—the very last, as you know, I am sure.'

Abel wished 'passon' would use words easier to understand, but at the same time he never budged from his determination not to go definitely against Susanna.

'Right enough, zur, right enough, but yü zee me an' Susanna us hev alwez pulled together. I dawn't go fer to zay as us be alwez zame ways o' thinkin', no vay, but I've a-gone most times 'er way—Susanna hev 'ad a mort o' trouble wan zort an' t'other—an' stuck on till 'er got through it zome ways. Susanna worn't niver the 'ooman to screech about nort, zame as most females be, but 'er hev worked along quiet like and mum, though 'er *can* let go, I reckon.

'Ees, I be mortal sorry, zo I be, but dawn't yü be botherin' about me, zur. I reckon I'll heer the t'others tell most as I might fancy as I was there meself. I be wonnerful partial to listenin' to other chaps a-tellin'.'

In the bosom of his family Abel adopted a less philosophic attitude.

The children were full of the village gossip over the coming event, garrulous with details, each more attractively enticing than the last, eager to know how it came about that 'vayther' said nothing of going.

'I shall be a bell-ringer when I gets a man; glad I bain't a maiden, I be.' Little Sam cast gleeful scorn towards the corner where three small maidens sat busily knitting in a spirit of rivalry as to which should first arrive at the mysterious operation of 'turnin' fer the heel,' wherein mother's more experienced hand was to aid.

Abel laughed shortly, with a half-formulated thought that 'maidens' developed into formidable handicaps on the actions of that superior animal man in later years.

It was a pleasant scene, the little cottage interior. From the open fireplace leaped the gleam of a log fire, that burned on the hearth, though the door stood open in the mild evening air, and Abel leaned against the doorway, surveying the plot of garden the tilling of which occupied most of his spare time at present: here and there amid the neatly-set bare rows of vegetables were dotted

clumps of primroses, or a root of daffodils—'Lent pitchers,' as the children in West Country fashion called them.

Within doors 'mother' was busy ironing. Abel could hear the thud of her dexterous iron against the board; now and again she would appear at his side to stoop and rub an iron smooth against the well-worn stone of the step.

There was not in the whole parish a better kept cottage than his own, tidier lads and lasses, more wholesome cooking of the good plain food, more careful tending in the time of sickness; to-night it all seemed to strike Abel afresh. He turned and glanced at the woman working hurriedly to catch the waning light; she was bending with flushed cheeks over the frills of a child's pinafore; the soft evening light hid all the harsh lines and ungentle curves of the strong, capable face. Abel fancied she looked as she used to do in those now far-away days of their 'courtin'.

She seemed herself never to have looked back to that time, when all the village marvelled that Susanna Webber, who might have wed even with Farmer Hawkins's nephew, should what the village termed 'throw herself away on a chap like Abel Cann, decent sort enough, but never likely to be any great shakes.'

Abel thought of the long-forgotten years; his was a slow brain; the alert, quick wits of his wife had come between himself and misfortune many a time since then. He had become used to her taking the lead, managing everything; asking her opinion had slowly developed into doing as she wished, until there was no other ruling power in the simple home save 'mother's.'

The light faded, growing even too dim for ironing, so 'mother' with economic prudence swept the sleepy, reluctant, protesting children off to bed before her.

Abel came in and shut the door, made up the fire, and drew the curtain. Then he sat down in a corner of the settle and pulled from his pocket a printed railway bill.

Abel was, as he admitted, 'nort of a scholar,' so it took him some minutes to gain an inkling as to the meaning of the cryptic mysteries of a time table. He studied it carefully with knotted brow, spreading the flimsy sheet on his fustian knee, and tracing the lines with a guiding forefinger the while.

'I doubt as I 'ad a-better think no more o' the job. Passon 'ee zays, "Hev wan more try, 'er wull sure-ly come round to last." 'Tis sort o' childish, I reckon, fer to be zo made up in jest a bit o' 'olidayin'; I can't mind when I hev a-bin zo zot on aught as this heer outin' business.'

He refolded the paper with clumsy fingers as a substantial figure came downstairs, but not before Susanna's quick eyes had seen and guessed the meaning of his abstraction.

'Yer mind is jest a-runnin' on the young passon's new-fangled nonsense, I can zee, Abel. Pity as 'ee can't find better work to do, I zay, than upsottin' all the parish wi' sich tomfoolery. I reg'lar ain't got patience wi' volks a-puttin' their fingers in every pie; let 'ee stick vast to praichin' and psalm-singin' instead o' gallivantin' off wi' a pack o' gurt men, as ought to be 'ome to work, be sure!'

Abel mused that a policy of dejected meekness had produced small effect in mitigating the severity of Susanna's opinion; and with heroic determination he resolved to put by finally all hope of joining the alluring company of to-morrow's proposed dissipation.

'Yü be rayther rough on thickey young chap, Susanna; 'ee's young-like, mebbe a bit different to what us hev been used to, but 'ee's gude to heart, an' it dawn't zim right to be down on the feller like a hunderd o' bricks.'

It was unusual for Abel to commit himself to so lengthy an expression of his views. Susanna looked at him quietly for an instant, and her ever-ready speech soon followed on her glance.

'Ees, fay, yü be fer findin' excuses fer the old feller hisself. I niver didn't zee yer equal, Abel; I should like to know where yü would be now ef I 'ad bin made zame way, not a-settin' by yer own fireside, I worn. Gude to 'eart, I dessay, zo's a bom-bailey, but 'ee purty zoon turns 'ee out o' 'ouse an' 'ome zame time. That's what 'twill come to, I zee plain as the nose on your face, wastin' an' spendin' yer money in bad ways. Give a man half a chance an' off he goes slap to the devil; I've zeed it afore, I know 'ow it will be right enough; I know the thin end o' the wedge, as they say, the first step, an' on they rattle 'ard as they can pelt till it ends in a drunkard's grave, sure as my name be Susanna Cann.'

The lurid picture of an inevitable future supervening on the initial excursion of a mild outing made small impression evidently on Abel's imagination, for he was looking intently on the garment that Susanna's deft fingers were sprinkling and rolling into a tight mass, preparatory to 'layin' to damp for ironin'.

He had observed the process countless times until he knew the minutiae to be gone through almost as well as Susanna herself;

but to-night he watched eagerly, as though it were unfamiliarly interesting.

Susanna moved backward and forward, spreading a snowy sheet over the ironing blanket, to protect from the tiniest speck the garment to be performed upon, then she came over to the fire, and lifting an iron tried it with a rapid wet finger to test its heat.

'Yü be a bit behind'and wi' yer clothes this week, more 'n usual, bain't 'ee?'

Susanna grunted inaudibly, and slid the iron swiftly over the steaming linen. Abel, in an unusually loquacious mood, repeated his question.

'Dawn't 'ee hide clatterin' there like an old gran'fer, me an' work gits plenty o' chance o' bein' well acquaint. I reckon the day as us go to vall out wi' wan t'other 'ull be the day as yü put me underground altogether.'

She went on calmly with the work before her. Susanna's probable, or, in cases of deep irritation, her immediate demise was such an oft-repeated story that it had long ceased to provoke even a conventional expression of dissent from her husband.

'I reckon as yü wouldn't be 'appy, doin' nothin', like a real lady.'

Westleigh's most characteristic description of 'a real lady' or 'gentleman' was invariably as an enviable being who under any circumstances 'never dawn't do nothin'.'

Susanna sniffed scornfully at the feebleness of the remark.

'Well, I dawn't s'pose as I shall ever git the chance o' findin' out, so theer ain't no sense in tellin' on it. If us be made to work theer ain't no use, as I zee, in screechin' an' hollerin' about it, but jest set to an' git it along out o' the road.'

Abel thought he had never seen his wife bestow such care over anything as the amount she was lavishing on the shirt to-night; she went over the front till it reflected her own face on its glossy, immaculate surface; she thumped and pressed away at the wristbands, until each became stiff and boardlike with no suspicion of crease or wrinkle; they hung white and gleaming over the table's edge as she returned to give a final touch to the perfection of the front.

It was often Susanna's proud boast that she might have earned a good living as a laundress. Many and many a time she had painted in glowing colours the roseate career that she could have made her own, if only she had possessed the prescient wisdom of

choosing washing instead of matrimony in the days of her youth. Looking at the result of her efforts to-night, Abel agreed that she had certainly missed an inevitable fame.

At last even Susanna's critical eye was satisfied. She dumped the iron on its stand with a sigh of relief at her accomplishment, and poising the garment in one hand held it at arm's length, regarding it with an artist's pride in an undoubted *chef-d'œuvre*.

Abel shared her pride to the full as his gaze followed hers, then his jaw dropped suddenly, and he ejaculated hoarsely:

'Why, if that ain't me best Sunday wan!'

Susanna stood with her head on one side.

'Though I zays it as shouldn't, this heer shirt is fit fer passon hisself. A deal better got up, I bet a sixpence, than Sarah Bissell's, her's all fer these starch-glazes an' washin' powders, poor trade instead o' rubbin' an' rinsin', an' jest a sprinkle o' turpentine to set the raw starch.'

She laid the shirt almost reverently over the back of a chair.

'What on airth be starin' at, Abel, like a stuck pig? In course 'tis yer best shirt. Yü dawn't think as I be lettin' 'ee go off in a coloured cotton to disgrace me before the parish—me as hev send 'ee to church in a starched shirt since ever I've 'ad the doin' fer 'ee. No, vay! Ef I'd a-rose up from me bed a-purpose, I'd a-strove to send 'ee off daycint.'

Abel leant against the settle, quivering with excitement.

'Yü dawn't go fer to zay as yü bain't zot agin me goin' to-morrer, as yü hev a-bin doin' that a-purpose.' Words failed him, the tide of revulsion swept him back to a normal condition of speechlessness in the face of events.

Susanna smiled grimly.

'They say as a fule will have hees folly. Yü needn't think as I admire yer taste nohow, nor thinks as the young passon is a-goin' to draw us all to heaven slap-dash, tied to hees own coat-tails. I dessay as that young chap thinks hisself doin' gude; mebbe 'ee will when 'ee gits a wife to tache 'un as us bain't all to be taught and praiched to as ef us was like as a row o' taties. Law bless the man, what be makin' faces to me thickey way fer? Thee had best git along to bed. Lord only knaws where yü'll be to-morrer, or whether yü'll git back 'ome safe an' sound no more.'

Abel staggered to his feet; he laid a heavy, trembling hand on his wife's arm.

''Twas more an' I looked fer, a goodish sight more'n I deserve, Susanna. Yü treat me most ways better than I'd a cause to

expect, me maid. I be a poor chap to tellin', as thee knoweth well, but I've a-got it all a-zaved up in me 'eart towards 'ee, me maid, thee knoweth that, I reckon !'

He put his arm around her waist and kissed her as in the old days of courting long ago.

Susanna freed herself with impatient tolerance of a momentary and rare exhibition of affection.

'Git away to sleep, yu'll miss the train come mornin'.'

She smiled as she heard him stumbling up the narrow stairway, smiled to herself as she tidied the place and put things ready for the morning. She looked up as she passed a framed and fearful presentment of Abel in his youth, representing an unhappy and uncomfortable being, in unaccustomed raiment, wearing an expression as though he were posed for instant execution. He had reminded her to-night of that young man of long ago, she had almost forgotten him herself.

'There ain't no countin' what makes a man fulish. I be glad, though, as 'ee took it zame as 'appened. There's worse 'usbands goin' a deal than Abel be a long chalk, zo there be.'

She set the table for his early breakfast, musing that it was not the long years of toil that had won this outburst of gratitude, but the single, slight act out of her rigid groove. Susanna was not wise enough to understand that one had led to the other inevitably ; but understanding or not, it made her happier, though she would have been the last to own as much, even to her deepest inner consciousness.

'Well done, Abel, well done ! Ah, I knew we should win in the end. Women want a little managing, we must go like Agag "delicately" when we want our own way.'

The Reverend Joseph was exultant, and to this day devoutly believes that he was the instrument of Susanna's vanquishment ; and Abel, who enjoyed his rare holiday rapturously, never undeceived him, for, truth to tell, he was not very certain himself how it all came about.

EDITH C. M. DART.

The Mission of Mr. Rider Haggard, and Rural Education.

THERE is a touch of the romantic in Mr. Rider Haggard's mission to the dwindling villages of rural England. It could hardly be otherwise when the creator of 'Umslopogaas' is concerned.

But the author of *Allan Quatermain* is also the writer of *A Farmer's Year*,¹ and those great gifts, which enabled him to produce for our delectation his inimitable works of fancy, are now being used in the cause of a declining industry to awaken the minds of men to the realisation of facts.

When people are apparently indifferent, and legislators apathetic, or perhaps, to be more correct, fearful to attempt the solution of a social problem rendered difficult and treacherous by reason of the conflicting interests which it involves, our 'farmer-novelist' goes out into the by-ways of Arcadia, and, like a prophet crying in the wilderness, bewails the desolation of the land, the unprofitable farms, the decaying industries, the depopulation of the rural districts of the best of their manhood. In unmistakable terms that bespeak the sincerity of his convictions, he warns the country of the dangers that are ahead, and the disastrous consequences which will ensue unless some remedy for the evil can be found.

A great deal has been said before about this interesting and important question; but nobody has hitherto dealt with it quite as Mr. Rider Haggard does.

We have been treated to lofty sentiments, mostly of an academic character, from politicians and doctrinaires; country squires have written lengthy letters to the newspapers, full of grief and

¹ London: Longmans, Green, & Co.

lamentation at the departure of Hodge from the village green ; farmers, usually so reticent, have delivered themselves, wisely or unwisely, at their agricultural meetings ; but, in much that has been said, there has always seemed a tendency to regard the farm labourer as a kind of unit, born to toil, the inheritor of hands to work, but with very little right to think. He has been denounced as a fool for leaving the plough. Elaborate arguments, anent income and expenditure, have been deduced, to convince him how much better off he would be to remain as he is. But in spite of it all he declines to stay, and the exodus is still steadily proceeding.

Now, Mr. Rider Haggard brings to the work of investigation of this thorny question a mind free from prejudice. This is a great advantage. Moreover, he possesses an extensive knowledge of human nature. He has a patriotic regard for national prosperity, and, what is equally important, a love of country life and a practical acquaintance with the agricultural industry. Such qualifications should be of hopeful augury.

It is not the purpose of this article to criticise Mr. Rider Haggard's methods or proposals. The writer is one who has spent the best part of his life amidst rural surroundings far remote from towns. He knows well, and deplores deeply, those evils which the author of *A Farmer's Year* desires to remove, and he is content for the moment to express to him his gratitude for the work he has undertaken, and to wish him 'God-speed' in his enterprise.

But there is one phase of the question with which the writer may claim to have more than a slight acquaintance, and that is the educational side—how far does the village school affect the agricultural industry and this deplored exodus of Hodge ? And, as the school must necessarily be an influential agent in the ultimate solution of the problem, since it provides the only mental equipment with which the village boy is sent forth to the battle of life, he ventures to submit some views upon the subject which special opportunities have enabled him to form after a good many years of close observation.

It is now pretty generally recognised that popular education is a necessity of the times, that it is, in fact, as the Duke of Devonshire asserted not long ago, one of the important lines of national defence.

The great industrial centres have been fully alive to this fact for a considerable time past, knowing well to what extent the keenness of foreign competition in manufactures was due to the

efficient system of public instruction which was in operation in the principal continental nations.

The rural districts of England and Wales have been slower to recognise this necessity. For years there existed in the minds of those who represented the agricultural industry a rooted prejudice against providing educational facilities for the labourer. The prejudice exists even now to a far greater extent than is generally supposed.

It is due to several causes. In the first place, the maintenance of the village school throws a responsibility, which often is very burdensome, upon the locality, and farmers, like most other people, object to the increase of rates. Then the operation of the Education Acts deprived the farmer of much of the child labour upon which he used to rely. This was a loss, especially to the smaller class of farmer. Many thought, and still think, that the village school provided too good an education for the children of the poor. They discovered that the more genteel private schools to which they sent their own children were really—many of them—less efficient than the public elementary school which it would not be consistent for them to use, and many a respected farmer has been mortified to find that the education of his own boy, for which he had to pay rather dearly, was not so good as that of the child of his carter, who got his education at the public cost. The attitude of his mind in reasoning round the situation thus created was, not that the private school should be improved, but that the village school should not be allowed to teach so much. These are doubtless some of the causes of the prejudice against the village school, but the root of it all is that the British farmer has never yet fully seen the possibilities of education so far as it related to his calling.

Conservative in the extreme, even to the verge of dulness, he has clung doggedly to his old-fashioned ways, and ridiculed the idea of applying science to agriculture, although the alert and resourceful foreigner was beating him out of the market. The uphill work of the county councils has been largely caused by the inability of the farmers to perceive, as the manufacturers had already done, the bearing of education upon their industry. It was from the farmers that the chief objections came when the 'whisky money' was devoted to technical education.

Although the county councils exposed themselves to a good deal of hostile criticism in the early and experimental stages of their history, in the matter of their educational policy, there

can be no denying that, whatever mistakes may have been made, many of them have done good work for education and for agriculture.

One important result of their steady and persistent efforts has been the breaking down of much of the prejudice alluded to, and the removing of scales from the eyes of a large section, at any rate, of the more intelligent farmers. But missionary effort is still needed in this direction.

When the antipathy has been effectually removed and the British agriculturist brought to realise that in these days of keen competition a knowledge of the scientific principles of agriculture, equal at least to that possessed by his competitors across the sea, is necessary to secure success, a great step will have been made towards the attainment of those objects for which Mr. Rider Haggard strives.

The Dublin Recess Committee, formed at the instigation of Mr. Plunkett, investigated the whole question of foreign competition so far as it related to agriculture, and produced overwhelming evidence that the success of the agricultural industry on the Continent was traceable to the good general education which is there provided for the country children in the primary schools. If a sound primary education is necessary for the prosperity of this industry on the Continent, it is equally necessary in England, and if a Special Commission could be appointed to investigate the matter, as it affects this country, it would doubtless be found that much of the agricultural depression which exists may be traced to the neglected education of the farmer as well as of the labourer.

Hence the importance of a sound system of national education.

In a circular setting forth the objects of his mission, Mr. Rider Haggard makes the following critical remark :

‘Even our system of education is a city system, designed, knowingly or not, to benefit or recruit the cities.’

Statements similar to this have been so frequently made in the educational controversies of these later days, and conclusions so utterly wrong have been drawn from them, by men who were obviously unfamiliar with the operation of the Education Code, that some comments upon Mr. Rider Haggard’s proposition may not be out of place.

The popular construction of his assertion will be that our educational system provides a curriculum specially adapted to the

wants of the city child, but which, therefore, is unsuited to the needs of the village child.

In the consideration of any system of differentiation in the matter of curriculum, as between the town and the country schools, there are one or two principles which should be kept in mind.

It should be recognised that the farm labourer, however lowly his position, is a citizen of the Empire, with the rights and privileges attached to citizenship; and that, although he may chance to dwell in a village, he may reasonably expect the provision by the State of such educational facilities as shall enable his child to obtain as *good* an education as the State provides for the child of the town. If such a privilege as this is denied him because he happens to live in the country, it is obvious that the very denial would help to drive him into the town.

Then it should be borne in mind that the public elementary schools are designed to give *elementary* education, and when you come to differentiate as between what is suitable for the country and what is suitable for the town, you will have to settle what elementary education is, and then you will discover that, broadly speaking, its scope is very little affected by locality, but that it provides a common basis upon which it ought to be possible to erect any kind of educational superstructure.

Another condition should also be kept in mind, and it is this. In every country parish there is a considerable proportion of children who would, under any circumstances, migrate; and others who, under the most favourable conditions, would not take up the work of agriculture. They are the families of the tradespeople, shopkeepers, and others of that class. In fact, the boys of a village school who are predestined for the plough are usually only a small proportion of the scholars. This fact alone, if justice is to be done all round, would seriously hamper any attempt at specialisation in more than a very limited degree.

Now let us briefly glance at the curriculum set forth in the Education Code, which, as we are so often told, and which even Mr. Rider Haggard suggests, is drawn up for the benefit of the children of the cities, and try to discover what subjects there prescribed are unsuited to the needs of country children.

The Code of 1901, only recently issued, prescribes as follows :

INFANT CLASSES.—The course of instruction in infant schools and classes should, as a rule, include—

Suitable instruction in reading, writing, and numbers.
Simple lessons on common things.
Appropriate and varied occupations.
Needlework.
Drawing.
Singing.
Physical exercises.

OLDER SCHOLARS.—The course of instruction for children who have passed out of the infants' class is divided into two parts, the first part including those subjects which are practically compulsory, or, as the Code mildly puts it, 'taken, as a rule, in all schools;' and the second part including a long list of special subjects, one or more of which can be taken when the circumstances of the school in the opinion of the inspector make it desirable.

Obligatory Subjects.

English, by which is to be understood reading, recitation, writing, composition, and grammar in so far as it bears upon the correct use of language.
Arithmetic.
Drawing (for boys).
Needlework (for girls).
Lessons, including object lessons, on geography, history, and common things.
Singing, which should be by note as a rule.
Physical training.

Now, this list represents the curriculum to which so much objection has been raised on account of its alleged unsuitability to the rustic. But a perusal of the subjects there set forth should satisfy any unprejudiced person that nothing is included which is calculated to unsettle the mind of little Hodge, or to create within him a distaste for rural life and occupations. On the contrary, the list is characterised by its adaptability, for in the hands of a capable teacher it can be made to suit the atmosphere, so to speak, of a particular district without any attempt at specialisation, or in any way depriving the child of that sound general

education which is as much the heritage of the villager as of the townsman.

What subject is there in the list that the village boy should not be taught? *English and Arithmetic* indicate the course of what is popularly known as 'the three R's.' No one would think of denying poor little Hodge the privilege of learning to read, to recite standard poetry, to write a letter or simple theme grammatically, or to work simple arithmetical problems.

A tilt is often made at the subject of *Drawing*, but it is usually by those who do not understand the object and scope of the instruction. The drawing exercises prescribed for the primary schools bear little resemblance to those of the young ladies' academy. They are simple exercises in Freehand, Model, and Geometrical Drawing, designed, not to make the village boy an artist, or to fire hopeless ambitions of academical distinction, but to train his hand and eye that he may all the more readily apply those gifts with which nature has provided him. These exercises are invaluable to lads who are destined for the carpenter's shop, or who become masons, blacksmiths, tailors, gardeners, and the like. And one can hardly conceive that a ploughman would plough a furrow less straight, or less deftly trim a hedge, because he had learned to draw lines, curves, and simple designs.

Then as to *Object Lessons*. The farm labourer is a citizen of the Empire. Through his vote he has a voice in controlling the Empire's destinies. If he is to perform his duty as a citizen intelligently it is surely expedient that he should have some knowledge of the Empire's magnitude and resources, and the history of its growth and development. This is provided in the object lessons on *Geography and History*.

There are some people who raise objections to the teaching of *Singing by Note* to village children. Music, they say, is a luxury, and should be paid for by those who want to learn it. There is some shortsightedness in this contention. 'Singing by Note' is only a limited form of music-teaching after all. But it is one of those simple accomplishments which, if more generally acquired, would tend to brighten village life. The village choirs, whether of the church or the chapel, directly profit by this instruction, and its effect may frequently be seen in other forms of village musical enterprise.

In this connection the writer is reminded of a meeting of the 'Derwent District Agricultural Association' at Stamford Bridge some months ago. It is not in the councils of the farmers that

one expects to hear the advocacy of somewhat startling educational departures. But one speaker, who was desirous of brightening village life, strongly expressed himself in favour of teaching instrumental music in the village schools, in addition to vocal, and utilising the skill thus acquired in the formation of village bands, and the revival of the old May-day festivities and dancing on the village green. Another speaker advocated in all seriousness, and his views were shared apparently by those around him, the addition of dancing to the rural school curriculum. These proposals may be considered Utopian, but there is wisdom in the suggestion that village education should not be of a restricted character, especially when it can be made to contribute to the pleasures of country life.

Thus far, it will be observed, the syllabus is of a general character, suitable alike for town and country boy, and contains nothing that the village boy, as such, can be consistently denied. But it is by means of the *Object Lessons on Common Things* that a distinct local colour can be given to the course.

In this respect the authorities at Whitehall provide such special catering for the rural districts as fully absolves them of the charge of caring only for the city child.

In the course of a delightful Circular issued to the managers of rural schools, the Board of Education says :

‘The Board are of opinion that one valuable means of evoking interest in country life is to select for the Object Lessons of the Lower Standards subjects that have a connection with the daily surroundings of the children, and that these lessons should lay the foundation of a somewhat more comprehensive teaching of a similar character in the Upper Standards. But these Object Lessons must not be, as is too often the case, mere repetitions of descriptions from text-books, or a mechanical interchange of set questions and answers between teacher and class. To be of any real use in stimulating the intelligence, the Object Lessons should be the practising ground for observation and inference, and they should be constantly illustrated by simple experiments and practical work, *in which the children can take part*, and which they can repeat for themselves at home with their own hands. . . . The lessons may be varied indefinitely to suit the needs of particular districts. They are meant to be typical and suggestive, and teachers, it is hoped, will frame others at their discretion. Further, these lessons are enhanced in value if they are connected with other subjects of study. The Object Lesson, for example,

and the Drawing Lesson may often be associated together, and the children should be taught to draw actual objects of graduated difficulty, and not merely to work from copies. . . . In this way they will gain a much more real knowledge of common implements, fruits, leaves, and insects than if these had been merely described by the teacher or read about in a lesson book. Composition exercises may also be given, after the practical experiments and observations have been made, for the purpose of training the children to express in words both what they have seen and the inferences which they draw from what they have seen ; and the children should be frequently required and helped to describe in their exercise books sights of familiar occurrence in the woods and in the fields. Problems in arithmetic connected with rural life may also be frequently set with advantage.'

In another paragraph we get the following :

'The teacher should, as occasion offers, take the children out of doors for school walks at the various seasons of the year, and give simple lessons on the spot about animals in the fields and farmyards, about ploughing and sowing, about fruit trees and forest trees, about birds, insects and flowers, and other objects of interest.'

Instructions such as these indicate the possibility of making school life in the country a rather delightful experience, and if the school conditions enable the teachers to carry them out, there can be little doubt that the results will be beneficial. To quote one more paragraph from this intensely interesting document, the Board of Education says :

'In this way, and in various other ways that teachers will discover for themselves, children who are brought up in village schools will learn to understand what they see about them, and to take an intelligent interest in the various processes of nature. This sort of teaching will, it is hoped, directly tend to foster in the children a genuine love for the country and for country pursuits.'

But the Board of Education has not confined itself simply to the giving of advice. It has supplemented its circular by the issue to the schools of practical schemes of work, laid out in detail, not to be slavishly copied, but as models upon which the teachers may frame their own schemes according to the needs of the localities. The aim of these schemes is that children who live in the country should when they leave school find themselves in sympathy with their surroundings, and should be able to take an

intelligent interest in the pursuits and occupations which are open to those whose lives and homes are in the country.

So far then as curriculum is concerned it will be acknowledged that the Board is proceeding along right lines, but we are confronted with the question: 'Is the village school in a position to effectually grapple with the work it has to do?'

Those who are familiar with the internal working of the schools will tell you that it is not, that under present conditions the excellent recommendations of the Board of Education are well nigh impossible, and that it is hopeless to think of making the village school one of the attractions of country life so long as these conditions exist.

In the first place, the schools are insufficiently staffed. It is no uncommon thing to find a school of forty or fifty children ranging in age from three to twelve under the control of a mistress and a child, sometimes a mistress alone. The school cannot be taught as one class because of the varying ages of the children. They are necessarily divided into five or six classes at least, and the process of instruction is bewildering. Of course the 'school ramble' so picturesquely described in the circular referred to is out of the question in schools such as these. And they are in the very districts where such methods of instruction are the most needed.

One does not look to departmental Blue-books for romance, but the following story from the educational Blue-book of last year not only illustrates this difficulty of village schoolkeeping, but reads like a chapter from a novel. It is the picture of work inside a village school in Yorkshire, and is from the pen of Mr. Smith, His Majesty's Inspector of Schools:

'I spent an afternoon in a village school. The number present was forty-four; thirty-five of these were spread over the first five standards, and nine infants were in two groups. Thus, the master, a man of sixty years, had seven classes to teach, and he had no help whatever, except for the needlework. I sat in the school and watched him with great interest. Seven classes were to be kept going. How would it be done? First, the two groups of infants were set to copy some letters that had been put upon the blackboard; then the First Standard was set to transcription; Standards Four and Five worked sums from their arithmetics; and the master gave the object lesson for the day to Standards Two and Three combined. This lesson was remarkable; it was broken into so many pieces. A boy would stand up in Standard Four or Five

and say, "Please, sir." The master would turn from his class, ask the interrupter for his difficulty, give him a hint, or step to his side, and, quick returning, picked up the thread of his broken lesson as best he might. Or, with a side glance he would observe a boy or girl apparently stuck in a sum, and, "Are you fast? Tell me if you are fast?" was thrown encouragingly again and again to the group at arithmetic. Two or three excursions to the infants, a hasty inspection from his place of Standard One transcription, an order to clean slates and refill them—such breaks were constantly recurring, yet on through it all went the object lesson.

'But (1) What an impossible task!

'(2) What a strain upon the teacher!

'(3) What a waste of the children's time!

'The efforts of the master to meet the demands upon time were pathetic. A school so staffed wastes much of the children's time, and makes a slave of the teacher. *There are many such in the rural parts of the Sheffield district, and additional help is urgently needed in them.*'

But cases similar to this are very numerous in the rural districts generally. Only recently the National Union of Teachers collected information on the condition of village education from 1,421 rural schools situated in all parts of the country. The returns reveal an extraordinary state of affairs. On this question of staffing, no less than sixty-two of the rural schools appealed to are reported as being taught unaided by one teacher; and in ninety-six more of them there was only one adult teacher—the second being a child monitor or pupil teacher.

These conditions are the result of want of means, and this is the effect of the system by which the schools are financed.

It is here that the educational system, described by Mr. Rider Haggard as 'a city system,' is unfair to the country schools.

Primary schools, town and rural, are at present supported by the Government grant—applied on the capitation principle—and by local funds arising from School Board rates and voluntary subscriptions. Under both heads the village school is hit the hardest. The large town school may come off well in the matter of Government grant, since the amount per head is multiplied by a big number of children, but the small country school fares differently. Yet there are certain initial expenses, such as the head teacher, and sundry matters of equipment which are common to both. Until the Government grant is so awarded as to meet the annual maintenance and establishment charges, the village

school can only worry along harassed by financial difficulties. Then again, owing to the poverty of the rural districts, the local aid to the village school is usually very meagre. Where there is a School Board the area is so restricted, and the rateable value so low, that a large portion of the local rate is eaten up in machinery expenses. And where there is not a School Board the majority of the people escape any local charge altogether on the plea that they prefer denominational or undenominational religious instruction—the real preference being in many cases a disinclination to pay for either.

Then, in the case of rural School Boards the incidence of the rate is grotesquely unfair. We find them varying from a $\frac{1}{2}d.$ in the £ to an amount as high as 3s. 4d. In a characteristic speech at Yarmouth the other day Dr. Macnamara, M.P., dealt with this phase of educational administration as it affected the county of Norfolk. He said, 'Leaving out the county boroughs of Yarmouth and Norwich, there were in Norfolk 140 School Boards for 22,000 School Board children. London had one School Board for 550,000 School Board children, and whatever did they want 140 School Boards down there for? Look at the incidence in the local rate. In the parish of Firsfield, Norfolk, it was $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ in the £. In the parish of New Buckenham it was 2s. 1d. Then take the village of Little Fransham, also in Norfolk. In that village there was one Board School with an average attendance last year of 36 children. That Board School, and that average attendance, necessitated the triennial election of a School Board of five members, and it had a paid clerk. See how that worked out. A 1d. in the £ in Little Fransham raised a precept of 4l. 17s. If they wanted a pupil teacher there was a fourpenny rate gone. The election cost 6l. 19s. 1d. That was nearly three halfpence gone. The clerk's salary was 8l. That was nearly two-pence gone. The legal expenses were 3l. 1s. 1d., so that the total administrative charges in Little Fransham amounted to 18l. 2s.; thus a threepenny rate out of the sixpenny rate they had levied—or one-half of the local support—was gone before they had got to the school at all. This was educational home rule run mad.'

But these anomalies are not confined to the county of Norfolk. They are common to all the rural districts of England, and they constitute a grievance which Mr. Rider Haggard would do well to investigate in the course of his mission.

Education is a national concern just as much as the Army and the Navy, and should be treated as an essential necessity to our

progress as a nation. The bulk of its cost should be borne by the national exchequer, and what margin is over should be met by a rate levied over a large area, such as that of a county, and nobody should be allowed to escape the charge.

This would be a great relief to those poor localities about which Mr. Rider Haggard tells us so pitiable a tale, and would tend to make the village school an attractive feature of village life in those very districts where its influence is most sorely needed.

It is true that the solution of the rural education difficulty is but a part of the complex problem that must be solved before agriculture will become the thriving industry it was once, and village life offer fair prospects to the young men who are now forsaking it for the towns, but it is an important part, and its effective solution would bring nearer the happier days we hope for.

R. R. C. GREGORY.

In the Woods at Sunrise.

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn ;
Morning's at seven ;
The hill-side's dew-pearled ;
The lark's on the wing ;
The snail's on the thorn :
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world !

THE year and the day are both at their best ; the year is young, no older than May, and the morning is a babe of four hours. The sun is just up, and the face of the earth is dew-pearled like the cheek of a child that has been waked to a new day, and laughs before the tears have dried that she shed in the indignation of being roused from beautiful sleep.

The little wood yonder, towards which I am directing my way, is but half clad in its beautiful spring green raiment, like a nymph that, surprised at her bathing, gathers the drapery around her, but half concealing her lovely limbs. But the leaves of the trees are sufficiently developed to show the marvellously effective contrasts in their shades of green, which vary from the delicate tints of the larch to the dark and solemn shades of the fir-trees which cover the slope of yonder hillock, and with the deep tones of whose *basso profundo* in this symphony of colour the delicious treble of the larches growing among them harmonizes most perfectly.

A few rabbits are on the watch as one crosses their domain, and scamper away long before one has arrived within gun range. They do not know that I carry no weapon and entertain no evil intention against them ; they never trust a man. There are few creatures that a rabbit does trust, for he has the misfortune to be everybody's prey, or nearly everybody's. You may see him feeding close to a sheep or two, or within hail of a cow ; but even these innocent people must make no noise, no *sudden* noise especially, for our friend cannot bear sudden noises ; he is the timidest of

creatures, and his principle in life is to mistrust everything that walks or flies. He is not to be blamed, for assuredly confidence on his part would be misplaced nine times out of ten, and if he were not a coward his life would be short indeed.

A pair of wood-pigeons feeding together in the corner of the field by the wood rise and fly back round a shoulder of the spinney and disappear among the trees beyond. We may safely say 'Au revoir,' for we are sure to see or hear them again presently.

It is not difficult to find a strategic position within the wood. At this hour almost any cover will suffice to hide one from the delightful people who inhabit the spinneys, for they are accustomed to have things to themselves at this time of the day. Man, they know well enough, likes to lie abed during the best part of the morning, and they thank Heaven for it, because—he being away—they may live in safety.

Man spells death, or at least deadly danger, to most of them. Naturally they prefer those hours of the day when, for reasons best known to himself, the arch-enemy stays at home.

Hence at this time of the morning they do not expect to see a man about, and are therefore not on the look-out for one. Sit still—if you are dressed in such a manner as to avoid attracting the eye by patches of white, such as shirt-cuffs or collar—and make no sound, and you will require little or no cover. Get behind a bramble if you will, or into a shallow, dry ditch, or other depression of the ground, and await events. Only be sure you do not cough or sneeze, or make any kind of movement while any sylvan personage is within sight or hearing, and all will be well.

There go our friends the pigeons. You can't see them, but only listen. The cock-bird is at his monotonous wooing; he will keep it up all day at this season from morning till night, and presumably she will admire him for it. Let us thank Heaven that we, in our love-making, though undoubtedly commonplace and wearisome, many of us, are not quite so monotonous as this good fellow. He seems to be repeating over and over again the same formula, 'You vowed you'd be true to me, true to me, didn't you? Vowed to be true to me, didn't you?' We have a pair of pouters at home and a few fantails, and each has his formula for wooing purposes. Says the pouter, 'Look at the fool! Look at the fool!' an unconscious condemner of self. His mate, however, has a high opinion of him and probably considers that his eloquence is wonderful. At any rate she tolerates, for months at a time, the repetition of this one sentence, and I have never seen her suddenly

dart out of her nest—as she would certainly be amply justified in doing—and bid him for Heaven's sake go away, to Jericho if he likes, or even a warmer place, and stop that hideous din. The fantail cock grumbles all day at his hen, and bows and struts—why does she not fall upon him suddenly and slay him? What a fine handsome bird is the wood-pigeon in comparison with his captivity-born relation! Nothing that moves on wings is wavier, cleverer, more cunning and wideawake. Look at the fantail in comparison! Nature never turned out a more helplessly incompetent creature than the fantail pigeon. I knew some fantails which had been in the habit of drinking at a little fountain in the garden, just in front of their own domain. Now this fountain ran dry, and supplies of water had to be provided in open vessels for the use of the pigeons, these vessels being placed here and there in convenient positions near the dry fountain, and close to their home. Yet those fantails came near to dying of drought by reason of their astonishment that the old supply should have failed, and of their inability to grasp the fact that water is water, whether it lie stagnant in a saucer or gurgles from its usual fountain source.

My lord Pheasant is about, strutting here and creeping there, pecking on this side and pecking presently on that. The very charming lady his wife is close by, upon her nest, and he is keeping in touch with her, occasionally raising his head and fluttering his wings as he utters that defiant cough of his, as though he would say, 'Cheer up, old woman, and sit tight; I'm here, and if anyone worries you, damme, I'll skin him.'

Suddenly he catches sight of me, and with a hurried cry of warning—the same cough, but with all the defiance taken out of it by sudden terror—he scuttles away into the brushwood and disappears. Presently I hear him again in the distance, and he has recovered his nerve, if I may judge from the tone of his voice.

Two small birds—a pair of nuthatches—are extremely busy flying from their nest, half-way up the trunk of a tree near by, and returning after an absence of a minute or two, the lady carrying something in her beak, while the gentleman carries nothing, but apparently speaks encouraging words. I dare not move in order to watch where they go to and what they do, for I am determined to remain motionless lest I frighten away persons of interest who may be close to me, though as yet unobserved. But the conduct of the little pair reminds me of something a friend told me of these little birds, and I am sure they are occupied in

the same way. My friend, watching, as I am now doing, a pair of nuthatches, found that they were plastering a hole in an oak-tree, at the bottom of which was their nest, with clay or mud from a wet spot in the ditch.

They would fly down to the ditch together, said he, and the hen bird would then collect a little clay or mud in her beak while the cock sat and watched her, entertaining her, while she did the work, with agreeable conversation; each beakful of mud was carried back and deposited with the greatest care upon the walls of the hole, and was then smoothed down in most workmanlike style. This went on until the whole neck or passage leading down to the nest of the birds had been thoroughly plastered round, forming a clean and symmetrical tunnel which might have done credit to a plumber.

My friend saw this same talented little pair of workmen the following spring. They had pegged out their claim too late this time, for a pair of great tits had usurped the hole, plaster and all, before they came to lay their claim to it. But the nuthatches were not to be disposed of so easily. They expelled the great tits, expelled also the masses of moss and other rubbish with which their beautiful plaster-way had been filled up by the usurpers, and cleaned the place up and re-plastered it where they considered this necessary. Then they entered into full possession. It always seems to me that this pair of great tits were too easily discouraged. They should have made a better fight for it. The story reminds me of another, in which a sparrow—a cock sparrow—played the principal part.

This doughty little champion, having chosen himself a lady who should share with him the delights and responsibilities of the year's nesting and rearing, proceeded to prospect around for a suitable site for the summer residence. Now it happened that a pair of newly-arrived swallows had chosen a spot which, I suppose, appealed with special force to the imagination of my cock sparrow, as a peculiarly charming, if not *the only* suitable place for his purpose. At any rate, he waited until the proprietors were absent, when he suddenly arrived, together with his mate, pounced upon the nest, and installed the lady therein, she doing her utmost to add moral and legal force to the action of her spouse by immediately laying one of her neat little eggs in the new claim.

When one of the swallows arrived presently, ignorant of the calamity awaiting him, he found Mrs. Sparrow in possession, and her warlike consort upon the spout close by, full of the desire for

a fight and of fierce determination to hold against all comers, *vi et armis*, the property he had captured by strategy. Undoubtedly he would have beaten off the swallows, but unfortunately the human person over whose window the latter had built their nest did not observe that neutrality which the sparrows had confidently expected of him. On the contrary, he sided strongly with the ousted proprietors of the demesne in dispute; in a word, he turned out Mrs. Sparrow with a broom handle and threw stones at her outraged lord.

But the indomitable spirit does not surrender to adversity; it bends for the moment, but regains, presently, the upright attitude of courage.

On the following morning the human friend of the swallows found his protégés flitting hither and thither in distress, uttering piteous screams, unable to enter the house they had left for the breakfast hour, because Mr. Cock Sparrow had seized the moment of their departure for marching his troops once again into the beleaguered citadel—in other words, he had quietly re-annexed the desired habitation, and his gentle lady sat once more upon the seat kept warm for her, nightlong, by the swallow's wife.

For two days this ding-dong fight continued. The man and the broomstick would clear the way for the swallows, who would re-enter into possession; the cock sparrow would presently find an opportunity to reinstall his lady, and again the broomstick would assume the rôle of the law, and yet again the sparrows persisted in wrong-doing, and would not surrender that to which they believed themselves entitled by every law excepting that of men and broomsticks.

At last the human creature became exasperated with the obstinacy—as he called it—of the sparrows; he took his gun, and, having turned the usurpers out of the nest, aimed a right and left shot at them as they flew into a neighbouring tree, killing the hen but clean-missing the principal offender, her lord and master.

At any rate the swallows would now enjoy their own in peace and comfort, said that man, in recounting the conclusion of the matter to others of his kind, who, however, sympathised with the sparrows in their affliction; with the poor dead lady that never lived to see her little eggs hatch out, and especially with the bereaved spouse, who would—they said—go mourning the summer long while other birds rejoiced.

Well, some birds might have mourned awhile, being fashioned that way; but my friend the cock sparrow was made of sterner

stuff. For when the human looked forth on the morrow he was greeted by the now familiar spectacle of two distressed swallows piping and flitting about their stolen nest, and of Mr. Cock Sparrow defending the captured position on behalf of a new wife whom he had already installed therein.

After this the man, deeply impressed, recognised that destiny, in the shape of this indomitable cock sparrow, was too strong for his protégés the swallows, and he left the usurper in undisturbed possession.

This story is, I believe, absolutely true, though I cannot claim personal acquaintance with the hero of the same, and was not the administrator of the Law, or in other words the holder of the broomstick.

Yet there are other birds who will desert their nests if you so much as look at them.

There is a rustling in the brushwood at my elbow, and out peeps a stoat. This is the champion tracker, the scout of all scouts. He is the Baden-Powell or the Burnham of small fourfooted folk. When he is about you must not breathe. As yet he has not seen me, and it may be that he will not, for his imagination is set upon smaller matters; he is upon an offensive expedition and is scouting for his stomach's weal, not for the safety of his skin from possible enemies.

A man's presence is not in his list of possible contingencies at this hour of the morning, therefore a man's body, if kept absolutely still and as much concealed as possible, may escape notice. See how the rascal works; his *modus operandi* is very thorough; never a little hole or hollow in the ground but he searches it; not a tuft of grass but he peers into and through it; he must climb up the six-foot trunk of a rotten tree in order to investigate the top, for, he says to himself, he is not going to forget that on one occasion at least he has known a fat rabbit lie out in just such a bed; Heaven knows why he did it, but where one has played the fool another may. That low-lying, rakish-looking little sinner has accounted for many a rabbit in his day, and probably this very morning will see another laid to his account, for stoat stands for death and the devil in rabbitese. Well, he is gone, and for all his pre-eminence in scouting he did not see me.

There is such a din of bird-song on every side that it is almost impossible to hear the faint rustling of those of my visitors who arrive afoot and must push their way through grass and undergrowth. It is a delicious din, of course, and I would not willingly

silence one single note of the glorious chorus. A practised listener can pick out each singer, like the experienced conductor of a great chorus; but, unlike the conductor, he need never frown at this singer or that, for a false note taken, or a lead, tentatively begun and bashfully abandoned, at the wrong beat. These singers never utter a note too soon or too late, nor is one notelet out of tune or inharmonious; both melody and harmony are perfect, and the words of the chorus are always the same; you may translate them as 'Te Deum laudamus,' or paraphrase them in Browning's language:

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn.

God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world.

The flies are a serious nuisance to a man who is endeavouring to remain motionless. One especially this morning (there is always one special one) is persistent in his maddening tactics. Open-air flies are far more persistent than indoor flies. I think the explanation is that their experience is mostly with cows and such folk, victims that have no hands to slay withal. Out-of-door flies are accustomed to sit upon the defenceless noses and faces of cows, and they are well aware that, though the exasperated creature may wrinkle them off two or three times, she cannot hurt them, and will presently desist. This fellow takes me for a cow or a horse, and believes himself to be well out of range of the swish of a destructive tail. I have upset him several times by wrinkling my nose and forehead, but he returns, fearing nothing. If I dared move I would not rest until I had wrought a horrible vengeance upon that fly; but though I see no animal close by which might be frightened away, it is not safe to move. How do I know that there is not a fox, or a badger, or some almost equally interesting visitor, at this moment peering at me through the cover, trying to make up his mind as to my right trouser leg, which lies well in view of all and sundry? I can imagine him reflecting, something in this fashion:

'It certainly looks like a human leg, and yet the thing is impossible on the face of it, for this is the Holy Hour—the hour of the rising of the sun, and no child of man dares to defile the wood with his presence. I will watch it, nevertheless, for ten minutes. If it remains motionless, well and good; if not——'

One is probably observed and watched, if one did but know

it, from all sides ; so that it is most important to remain still and silent. Yet how can I, with this detestable, persistent fly crawling over my nose? There is a fat spider hammocked in a beautiful symmetrical web within a yard of my face. O that my enemy would be persuaded to take a short flight, for the good of his appetite, and so get himself into trouble with my friend there! I am not of a cruel disposition, I have not come to take life ; but this fly is calling up every dormant flaw in my character ; evil tempers are awaking, with truculence and the desire to shed blood. I should look on unmoved while this particular fly was bound about and then sucked to death in the usual cold-blooded style of Mrs. Spider's operations ; a spectacle which generally sickens me, for it is a ghastly and a gruesome fate, one of the cruellest that can befall any creature at the hands of another, even though one seek through the whole list of the barbarities of Nature's daily round of life and death.

Just as the fly settles for the hundredth time upon my nose, a visitor appears in the arena before my eyes. He comes ambling in at a kind of lazy canter, and sits down within three yards of me to take a look round—a rabbit. This is a young rabbit, and young rabbits are droll, foolish creatures, full of idiotic, meaningless antics. A friend has come out and joined him. One stretches its nose and touches the flank of the other : just touches it, and starts back as though he had had an electric shock ; that's his idea of a joke.

Now, if that rabbit were a schoolboy, somebody would call him a 'funny ass.' They play off other little jokes upon one another. One touches the nose of his companion, and both start back. One canters lazily half a yard away, and the other jumps over him. There is ear-play and whisker-play going on all the while ; perhaps it is their way of conversing ; maybe they are passing remarks rich in facetiousness—though, somehow, one cannot believe in much humour from a rabbit ; he is a 'funny ass,' but not very witty.

Nevertheless, a thousand dangers constantly threatening have developed in him an extraordinary alertness, and you will find him a difficult person to stalk. Even in his babyhood he is a chip of the old block, and cunning beyond belief in keeping out of sight when danger is about. No one in all the world knows better than he how to use every blade of grass, every natural inequality of the ground, every square inch of cover to help him escape to his burrow before he can be seen and shot.

Suddenly one of my friends canters across the arena, and lies for a minute close to my thorn-bush. The other fellow ambles in his dot-and-go-one fashion after him. They sit together a moment or two sagely doing nothing, then abruptly disappear. Something has stirred and alarmed them. Maybe they caught sight of our friend the stoat; perhaps I moved; at any rate, they have gone, both of them, to spend the day—as their days must for ever be spent until the fatal one arrives—in dodging dangers real and fancied, in much eating, and in feeble fooling. The wood-pigeons are still at their monotonous conversation; one grows tired of it, and wishes the persistent wooer would escort his lady out into the fields for a little refreshment. He is a tremendous fellow for eating, and so is the lady, as the farmers around know to their cost.

There is a sudden rustling and crackling of twigs—there! they have gone to breakfast, thank goodness! In the bough of a big tree over my head a jackdaw has arrived and taken up his position. What he wants there it is impossible to say, unless it be to set up a horrible din for the fun of the thing. He sits and caws and croaks and talks to himself as though he had the grandest of jokes bottled up, and were hugging himself with the drollery of it. He has come here to laugh; to relieve himself by letting off a little steam; presently he will return whence he came and continue his mischievous enterprise, whatever it may be. Probably he has robbed a seagull or a rook of some choice morsel, and is gloating over the achievement. Perhaps he has simply come to annoy someone: some hen pheasant who wishes for quiet as she sits brooding upon her nestful of eggs. Maybe he is saying to her that she had better be careful how she leaves her treasures in order to get her breakfast. 'I'll have one of them,' says he, 'as sure as eggs is eggs, so don't you make any mistake!'

A sudden rustling and scolding and chiding, and, behold! an army of a dozen starlings have settled in the tree, and are intent upon turning out the noisy intruder. Is it a pure busybody love of interference on their part, or do they consider his presence here a personal insult or menace? They seem so much in earnest that one would suppose they were anxious for the safety of wives and families, hatched or otherwise; but the mischievous black rascal can do them no harm here, for their domestic interests lie, surely, nearer the chimneys of the village yonder? Perhaps he has offended them elsewhere, and came here to laugh over and rehearse the incident, and they have followed him. At any rate,

they are making it uncomfortably hot for him, and after a few vigorous, protesting caws—bad words, very likely, levelled at their noisy officiousness—he suddenly departs, followed by the chattering tribe.

A couple of minutes later the majority of them return to the tree, still chattering. They tell one another how they have chased him clean away across two fields and over the marsh; how splendidly they managed it; how intrepid was their conduct; how he cawed aloud in his terror; then suddenly they all depart, as with one mind, still talking vigorously.

They will all settle together, in a minute, in the nearest grass-field, and in half a second each will be busily and silently feeding, eating Heaven knows what tiny inhabitants of the grass-blades, as though they were under contract to clean the field of insects within a certain space of time.

They are jolly, busy, intense people, these starlings. Everything they do is done vigorously and quickly, and that whistle of theirs is one of the sweetest of the spring-time sounds.

Their other vocal attempts are crude and unconvincing, though they take a wondrous pride in the absurd sounds they manage to produce; but the whistle, of which they think nothing, is quite charming. The lady starlings are persons of scant judgment. They should insist upon being wooed in the sweet tones which their lords can produce at will, unless, indeed, they take a humorous delight in watching the poor fellows posturing and grimacing in order to reel off the few bars of cracked and croaky melody which is their orthodox love-song.

In this, as in everything else, however, the starling is so thoroughly in earnest that one cannot help respecting his efforts, while regretting that he should have so poor an ear for music that he does not even know which are his real successes in vocalism, and which his failures.

That jackdaw is a mischievous little rascal as ever lived in a cliff by the sea. To watch his antics sometimes, you would suppose he believed himself to be bigger and stronger than his big brother the rook, if not actually mightier than the seagull. Watch him follow the plough with a mixed company of rooks and gulls. He will have his share of the good things, and will even succeed, occasionally, in wresting some dainty from a rook double his size; nay, he will presume to dispute a worm with a gull, his threefold superior in weight and strength; and, what is more, by virtue of sheer impudence and clamouring he will sometimes prevail, for

the seagull is a good-natured, long-suffering fellow if not driven beyond the verge. Naturally, if thus driven, he will make very short work of friend Jackdaw, and will show him pretty decisively who is going to be master.

A couple of big white birds fly high over my head, going inland, even as I jot down these notes—gulls, of course. They know that Farmer Minifie or Farmer Mudge has cut his vetch for fodder, and is ploughing up the patch for cabbage plants. They are off to breakfast. There go a party of rooks, too; they are cawing anxiously, one of them querulously. I think he is saying: 'There, I told you so! I warned you to hurry up, or those greedy grey brutes would get ahead of us, and so they have. It will serve you right if you don't get a blessed grub.' And another replies consolingly, albeit anxiously: 'Come, come, there'll be enough for all; and, what's more, I don't see that old Farmer Mudge is out with his plough yet. There's heaps of time.'

So there is, as a matter of fact, for old Mudge won't be out for an hour yet, and gulls and rooks will have to wait about or cater for themselves meanwhile; and both parties will scold creation freely the while, after their intolerant manner. Someone told me the other day of a battle-royal between two such parties—a squadron, that is, of rooks, and another of gulls, with a bevy of jackdaws thrown in. The jackdaws began it. Something induced them to attack the rooks first; some question as to the priority of rights to dainties upturned by the plough of a Mr. Mudge. The jackdaws disagreed with the rooks, and attacked them in a body. The rooks fled.

Then those jackdaws concluded that they could 'whip creation,' and rushed screaming upon the gulls, who outnumbered them two to one. But here they found their match and a little more. The gulls were lazy and good-natured at first, after their manner; they swerved upwards as the jackdaws made for them. 'Come, come, be sensible creatures, you little black fellows,' they said, or words to that effect. 'Go home to your mammas while your heads are still on your shoulders, or maybe someone will be knocking them off for you.'

But the jackdaws would not listen to good-natured advice, and did not appreciate the lazy, half-amused toleration of the great for the small; they must needs persist in their attack.

Then suddenly the gulls lost patience. Maybe one of the 'little black fellows' said something which went home, and roused their racial indignation. At any rate the jackdaws soon

found that they had bitten off more than they could chew; enough, indeed, to choke them entirely. Down swept the gulls, their great masterful wings sweeping the air with wonderful power; after the jackdaws they came, a screaming, swearing squadron. The impudent black people turned now and fled; they had realised their mistake; many reached home in safety, but some never left that ploughed field alive, for the gulls vented their anger upon them, and two at least of the smaller fellows breathed out their impertinent spirits then and there upon the sward. Terribly swift and sure are the gulls when it comes to business. Watch one some time and see what an enormous reserve of strength he possesses in those slowly moving white wings. Judge what strength it must require to follow a steamer, as our friend there can do, for days and nights without resting, pounding on and on until one would think the weary motor-power must collapse and the bird pitch helpless into the sea, yet it does not. On the contrary, throw out a piece or two of food, and you will find the wings are not so weary but that on this much encouragement they will carry their hungry owner another cool hundred of miles or so. Have you ever seen a young gull? He is the weirdest thing in creation as he sits and gapes at you, a lone thing on a bare rock, a fluffy, wizened, shapeless, impossible thing that seems rooted to the spot, and is not in the least afraid of strangers.

I can smell a fox quite distinctly. You may smile, but it is true. I believe that if all other trades failed me I might pick up a fair living as an amateur foxhound, for my olfactory sense never fails me when one of these highly perfumed gentry is about. I smell one now, I say, quite distinctly. Probably he has seen and is watching me. O that some sudden and unerring form of instant death would assail this most condemnable fly, that will not be warned and leave me! I would not move at this instant for a king's ransom. There is a slight rustle in the bracken opposite—is it my fox? The wind is from that side, so it is quite likely. Probably he is staring at me, all eyes, making up his mind as to the identity of my left foot, of which he has a full view of the sole. Alas! he has come to a correct and wise judgment upon the subject; there is more rustling, going further from me, and he is gone. Exit fox, if fox it were; and exit also the vulpine perfume. I have no doubt that this was Reynard. He is too clever for simple folk like me.

The fly takes this opportunity to creep into my ear; a foolish movement from his point of view, did he but know it, for I am

annoyed with the fox, and this extra aggravation is the signing of his death warrant. At a tap he dies—he has deserved his fate, and almost before he has settled his legs in death he is tossed into the spider's web and the ogre has him. Spiders are particular folk as to their food. Meat must be alive to please them, and the blood hot. If I had waited half a minute and then thrown my enemy to her, her ladyship would have taken no notice of his arrival, though presently she would have come deliberately along and cut him out of her web. As it was, she was upon him in an instant, and had whirled him round and round and enmeshed him, and had commenced her horrible blood-sucking, all in less than a quarter of a minute. Put a large fly or a wasp within her meshes and she will do her utmost to assist his efforts to escape. His presence is not desired; he commits too much havoc and destroys whole inches of carefully-constructed web. She dare not approach and attack him, or endeavour to quiet his struggles by twining fibre about his wings and limbs; he is too big and too vigorous for that; therefore she prefers to nip the wires and help him to get out as quickly as possible, anathematising both him and his kind, doubtless, as she does so. In a couple of minutes my late enemy is a sucked-out skeleton, and half a minute later still his formless frame, light, now, as the air to which he is committed, is disentangled or cut from the meshes and allowed to drop out and disappear. There, my friend—so die all my enemies, though I am glad to think you were dead when the spider got hold of you!

So long as there is nothing else to look at, there is always entertainment to be found in watching the spider and her ways. She takes no notice of the tiny flies: happily for them, they are not worth her attention; but let one of the size of my late friend wander in, and with inconceivable rapidity he is trussed and dressed, tightly bound into a sausage, and either eaten at once or left for a convenient opportunity—poor wretch, his feelings are not to be envied; and when the fatal moment arrives she will come swarming along and suck his blood 'while he waits.'

My friends the two young rabbits come suddenly back into the arena, cantering in in their own slip-sloppety manner. They are about to cross without staying, but that I cannot allow. 'Bo!' I say in a tone of gentle conviction. Both instantly squat down upon their haunches, and assume the wisest possible expression. One sits with his two ears pointing respectively north-west and south-east; the other has both stuck straight up. They are

listening and wondering. They converse by twitching the whiskers and by moving the ears.

'What on earth was it?' says the first.

'Don't know—a rook I *think*,' says the other; 'but possibly something dreadful.'

'Good Heavens—*what*?'

'Well, to tell you the truth it sounded to me something like the voice of a man.'

'How perfectly awful,' says No. 1, setting his ears travelling backwards and forwards in great agitation. 'Ought we to sit tight or bolt?'

'I daren't move, for one; my limbs are immovable for terror; it's so dreadful not knowing where he is——'

'Bo,' I repeat.

This time rabbit No. 1 sees me, and like a lightning flash he is gone. The other has not seen me. I raise an arm. Where is bunny? The electric spark is a loafer in comparison with the rapidity of his disappearance; he was here and he is gone—and that is the whole story. The movement of my arm sets half a dozen unguessed presences in motion. A couple of big birds fly with a crash from a tree close by—wood-pigeons, of course; they must have been there all the while, half aware of my presence but not quite certain, and therefore silent. Or they may have arrived and settled in the noiseless manner of their tribe, and I heard nothing of it. A rabbit—a large one—jumps suddenly into the open, and as suddenly jumps back into cover. A rook just about to alight in a tree almost overhead sings out 'caw,' and goes on further. Lastly a blackbird speeds chattering and scolding away.

A pheasant, in the field outside, crows twice defiantly, challenging the sudden noise, and into the open suddenly trots my old friend the stoat. He is on the track of the rabbits. He sniffs about where they sat and cowered; then he trots into the cover where they disappeared: grim, earnest, determined, certain as the hour. Probably before the day is much older he will have one of our friends there; he will catch him while he is playing some of his feeble jokes upon his foolish companion; he will go for the back of the head—he knows the right spot—and poor old 'funny ass' will have cut his last caper.

I grow stiff and the morning grows comparatively old—the idea of breakfast becomes increasingly attractive. Away in the distance the pair of wood-pigeons still carry on their persistent love-duet; will she never tire of his monotonous assurances and

bid him, for Heaven's sake, leave her in peace and go and get his lunch? A thrush here and a thrush there are still singing wildly ecstatic songs, each longing to excel the other. 'Do it, do it, do it!' sings one, and the other, an ungrammatical bird, replies, 'Me do it, me do it, me do it!' 'Easy a bit,' cries a tree-climber, 'easy a little bit!' 'Who's afraid, who's afraid?' replies the thrush—'me do it, me do it, me do it!'

And the larks; oh, the larks! Who shall number them this day? Look up where you will and you shall hear one singing his very soul out—now a long-winded spell of unphrased melody, now a bar or two deliciously phrased; then a black spot becomes visible, the song grows louder, louder still, and abruptly ceases; and lo! a small brown bird flies tamely down into the grass; a mere brown, speckly bird—like another—yet a poet, an inspired singer, for whose ambition the world lies too low, and he must soar and seek the high heaven.

The cows are coming out into the fields, walking quickly, delighted to draw their feet through the cool grass; they taste a mouthful here and another there; but troop on, deeper into the field, seeking some favourite remembered spot.

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven.

In the distance is the sea. It lies shimmering in the early sunshine, cool, quiet, blue. I am going down into its fascinating embrace before trudging home to breakfast. Already half a hundred gulls stand solemnly in the shallows by the edge of the water, where sand and tide meet and part each instant. Why are they so solemn, so quiet? Is it possible that Farmer Mudge has fed them too well; that to be disturbed is a grievance? They move, however, with a cry of annoyance, taking wing heavily and flying out but a short way to sea, where they settle and float like tiny beautiful model yachts. Above, the larks; above them, Heaven. Inland, sunshine and dew-pearls, the song of many birds, the lowing of the pleased cattle, the barking of a dog in the distance. The day has started well; it will run on happily until noon, the time for all nature to repose:

God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world.

FRED WHISHAW.

At the Sign of the Ship.

EVERY nation, probably, has the murderers whom it deserves, and whom it breeds in accordance with its character and environment. The miracle is that the nations do not produce more murderers, for in every country there seems to be plenty of persons who sympathise with the criminal. In England when the jury has delivered its verdict, and when the judge has said what he is obliged to say, some mischievous sentimentalists often stir up an agitation, sign petitions, and behave as if the murderer were a Christian martyr. There are much worse forms of folly than our ordinary kind, for it lives in a perverted sense of fair play. It is as if the gallery at a cricket match refused to accept the umpire's decision, and yelled 'Not out,' 'Go back,' and so forth. The readers of the trial in the newspapers are the gallery; they are not really at the point of view; that is occupied by the judge and the jury. But they are not satisfied with the evidence; they believe in 'the other man,' the mysterious criminal who has really done the deed, they say, and who can never be discovered. Of course, if a young woman is guilty, the enthusiasm for her is immense, and if she just escapes, she receives as many proposals of marriage as Queen Mary did after her husband's taking-off. Yet, to the well-balanced mind, a probable or even a possible murderess does not seem 'one to be desired' as a wife. However, we may say this for our British excitements, that they commonly arise from a perverted sense of fair play, and a doubt as to whether the condemned has received the full benefit of the doubt. As a rule almost universal, the accused is guilty, so that my private mind is commonly much at ease when the accused is condemned. The odds against his innocence are incalculable; still, there have been miscarriages of justice, and the fear of one of these usually inspires British emotion, when emotion there is.

In America, if we may judge by the remarks of Mr. Howells in *Harper's Magazine* for May, sentiment is not quite the same. He describes the burning alive of a negro, untried, not long ago, and we have perhaps no recent case of such a collective crime in this country. The poor Irishwoman who was burned as a fairy changeling was destroyed by her husband and family, not publicly, in view of thousands of people. It was in Caithness, a hundred and eighty years ago, that such a deed was last perpetrated in these isles, with some shadow of legal procedure. The citizens, in the case of the negro, might have waited for the verdict of a jury, instead of behaving like Hurons or Iroquois, though, granting the man's guilt, there was everything to cause excitement and a Porteous riot.

* * *

But Mr. Howells adds to his indictment against his countrymen, the sympathy with, and the impunity of, the murderous Injured Husband. Here he asks for, and gets, damages, says Mr. Howells; and I own that I do not understand how anybody can accept this antiquated form of atonement. But, in America, if he assassinates, it seems that he receives a good deal of public sympathy. Now there does seem something mean about premeditated assassination. One fails to see any satisfaction in it, though, in such cases and some others, one can understand the satisfaction of a duel. It is illogical, but it is not dastardly, as all assassination always is. Even Charlotte Corday made a mistake. The Injured Husband with his revolver is not likely to be applauded by a British jury. We cannot have all the faults.

* * *

In France we have the evidence collected by Mr. H. B. Irving, in *Studies of French Criminals*.^{*} It is not a pleasant book, but it is bitterly instructive. The accounts of the legal procedure, the interrogation of the accused, public or private, the verbal duels between him and his judges, corroborate what we read with scepticism in the novels of Gaboriau and Montépin. The man is bullied; traps are set for him; often he has the better of the combat. 'The national character responds with unflinching spirit to the stimulus of what must always be a dramatic situation,' says Mr. Irving. Thus one abominable ruffian, of no nation in particular, answered the judge, 'If a prisoner holds up his head, he is called

* Heinemann.

impudent ; if he is prostrate with grief, he is told that he is overcome with remorse.' It seems illogical, and odious, to seek for evidence of guilt in the demeanour of the accused.

* * *

The 'criminous clerks' are frightful examples. The French clergy, as a rule, are among the salt of the earth, but Mr. Irving quotes a statement that recruits are now hard to obtain, and that born ruffians (four out of one small village) enter the priesthood. The Abbé Auriol was a kind of half-breed, part Spanish, part French. He did not want to be a priest at all. Being caught in an attempt to enlist, he threw himself at the foot of the altar, exclaiming, 'Oh God, if it be my fate to be a false priest, grant that I may never rise up again!' He had plenty of religious emotion, but no character at all. Unhappily his prayer was not heard. The Abbé had a love affair. He tried to shake off his orders, and cross the border into Spain ; but he failed, and got an old lady to make him her heir, and poisoned the old lady and her sister. He was caught, and tried to poison himself, and confessed under the stress of solitary confinement, and retracted his confession. After a very unfair trial, he was condemned, with 'extenuating circumstances.' He was a daisy compared with two other abbés, one of whom, when clearly guilty of almost every crime, was merely recommended by a Bishop, too like Victor Hugo's prelate in *Les Misérables*, to try another parish.

* * *

The emotional crimes are the oddest. Young men read psychological novels : naturally hysterical and morbid, they become worse. They write their own romances in blood with knife or revolver, and get a term of imprisonment. 'The Affair at Sidi Marbrouk' is the most interesting. The evidence does not enable us to determine whether Madame Grey was in love with Charles and gave him a tryst, to end in a double suicide, or whether he beguiled her into a trap by hypnotism, and then killed her and failed quite to blow his own brains out. On the one side, there is no indication that the lady was in love with the man. She left her house with him for a drive, leaving a commonplace letter of domestic trivialities about her children unfinished in her portfolio. In a few hours she was found dead in disgraceful circumstances. Her husband, who entirely believed in her innocence, once found her in a trance, hypnotised by looking at a

teaspoon! As for Mr. Charles, he raved like a fool in a psychological novel. 'I loved children at first sight, a sign, as Céard says, that the mind is full of disillusion.' I must be half way to murder, if liking children is proof of homicidal tendencies. It seems an innocent sort of sentiment, whatever Céard may say. This creature Charles had been the hero of a psychological novel by a friend, and lived up to it. He invoked Sophocles (of all healthy minded people) and Mr. Herbert Spencer to justify his proceedings. In fact, he had the vanity of the criminal and the lunatic. The judge declared that the expression of Madame Gey's face when she left her home was inconsistent with guilt. The accused said, 'Excessive nervous excitement is in many cases accompanied by a peculiar outward composure.' What a dialogue! In fact, abundant evidence proved that the poor lady was 'more than usual calm.' Perhaps in the fatal house (and why did she ever enter it?) she happened to see a teaspoon. M. Gey gave evidence that she was the least romantic person he ever knew, and they had been husband and wife for ten years. When he wakened her from the teaspoon trance she said that she 'felt like a cock in front of a stripe' (a chalk line). 'She had recently read a number of books on hypnotism.' In fact, she was—though a quiet domestic lady, devoted to her children—in a queer state of nerves. But, whether she was in love with Charles, and a willing victim, or a somnambulist, the hero had no business to pistol her. The jury found him guilty of premeditated murder, and wrote to M. Carnot protesting against the lenity of the sentence. M. Gey asked that the murderer might be released, so that he might get at him. But Charles was not guillotined to encourage other young psychological heroes. We seem to have no case quite like this, for the followers of Dick Turpin are not students of Sophocles and Mr. Herbert Spencer. The letters of Madame Weiss, who kept writing to her lover while she was poisoning her husband, are, in places, horribly like *The Casket Letters*, including the excuse for bad handwriting:

Madame Weiss.—'What I am about to do is very ugly.'

Casket Letters.—'I would not do it to him for my own revenge. My heart bleeds at it.'

Madame Weiss.—'It is agreed, Felix. You shall be obeyed.'

Casket Letters.—'Remember how were it not to obey you, I had rather be dead ere I did it.'

Madame Weiss.—'Oh, Felix, love me, for the hideousness of my task glares at me.'

Casket Letters.—‘You make me dissemble so far that I have horror thereat. . . . Remember your love, and write to her, and that very oft.’

Mr. Irving says of Madame Weiss ‘such women efface themselves in the presence of the man they love; they are content to act and think as he directs, they want above all to be dominated.’ That is exactly the tone of all the letters which the Queen is accused of writing to Bothwell. But, on the other hand, she had *not* been dominated; in case upon case, between Riccio’s murder and Darnley’s, she had opposed Bothwell; had taken the side of her brother, Moray, and of Lethington, against him; had taken it in every dispute that arose, and, even when a prisoner in Bothwell’s hands, had arisen in wrath and saved Lethington from his dagger. This is what makes the puzzle. *The Casket Letters* do correspond with wonderful closeness to the letters of Madame Weiss, when she is obeying her lover by poisoning her husband. She is ‘dominated.’ But then Mary, again and again, had declined to be dominated. Nor was Mary a ‘pious Lutheran,’ like Madame Weiss; nor did she, like Madame Weiss, lack the sense of humour; nor had she read psychological problem novels.

* * *

As I write a Frenchman has been acquitted and applauded for killing his wife. It really does not seem a very gallant act to shoot an unarmed woman. But it was *un crime passionnel*. And if her brother shoots her husband, how is that?

According to Mr. Irving, students of criminal anthropology have tried to throw the blame of the existence of all these horrible people on—the savage! They ‘throw back’ to the poor Indian, by heredity. This cruel charge has broken down, Mr. Irving says, and I don’t wonder at it. I never heard of a Huron or a Mincopie who read psychological novels, or Mr. Herbert Spencer, that least inflammatory of philosophers, one would suppose. Indeed, I hardly ever heard of any criminal savages. They torture, and slay, and rob, but only in what they think a state of war. They hardly ever steal from each other. If they break the seventh commandment, they are ready to fight. A perpetual state of war gives them a safety-valve, and civil crimes are scarcely known in a ‘state of nature.’ As a rule the really out-and-out criminal seems to have a want of humour, which prevents him from seeing the proportions of things. His own desires bulk monstrous, and hide everything else. He has also the vanity of the maniac, and one of Mr.

Irving's moral 'freaks' came of a family so crazy that we may doubt her moral responsibility. If society could catch this marked class of people early, and had power to shut them up—but we have not reached that level of scientific conduct of life. Moreover, it is highly possible that a few geniuses, such as Byron, would have been relentlessly immured. Judging from Mr. Hewlett's novel, *Richard Yea-and-Nay*, all the early Plantagenets would thus have been nipped in the bud ere they blossomed into their peculiar blend of wolf and cat. Everybody else has read *Richard Yea-and-Nay* by this time, probably, but I am fresh from it. 'Tis extraordinarily vivid and coloured, a great bright tapestry, new unrolled, with argent and azure, or and gules and sable, bright as in the middle age. The style, too, is a successful invention; it is so hard to see how a romance of the Crusades ought to be written. Modern phrases are out of place: sham archaisms are tedious. But Mr. Hewlett has found out a way. The period is not 'my period,' I do not follow the history easily. I have another kind of King John in my mind; not such a despicably nervous character. John kept the Scots in rare order: not an easy thing for a timid man to do. When Jehane becomes the mother of the children of the Old Man of the Mountain, a kind of human white cockatoo, I am sensibly shocked. The Marquis of Montferrat is so lively in *The Talisman*, after Mr. Hewlett assassinates him (which I do not think he could have stood), that I cannot easily believe in this version of the affair. In fact, it is not easy to cope with Scott in one of his own fields, and I do not think that Mr. Hewlett is quite so successful in the high emprise as the author of *Kidnapped*. Still, it is a gallant thing to strike the shield of the Templar, and with the point: even if the challenger has not the better of the tourney.

* . *

What a generation of blunderers we are! In a weekly review there was lately a notice of Mr. Graham Hope's promising first novel, *The Cardinal's Conscience*. The Cardinal falls in love with a Huguenot girl, and the reviewer dates the period as 'the eleventh century.' It can hardly be a misprint, as 'eleventh' can scarcely be mistaken by the compositor for 'sixteenth.' However, I ought, of all men, to give the reviewer the benefit of the doubt, as my own Christian name (which for my sins is Andrew, I may say), written by my own hand, lately returned to me, in proof, as Hudson. The strokes of the A probably

left a gap at the top, and you have H. An *n* is taken for a *u*, a *d* comes in place, so you have *Hud*. My *r* is very like my *s*=*Huds*, and once you have *Huds*, common sense rejects *Hudsew*, and gives *Hudson*. But, I appeal to the compositor, can you get *sixteenth* out of *eleventh*? If not, conceive the reviewer who thinks that Calvin was contemporary with the Norman Conquest! Again I see a review of a History of English Literature by a Professor. He is quoted as declaring that Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is the first attempt 'to weld the ballads dealing with this subject into a great poem or a continuous book.' Can this Professor have read either the Arthurian ballads, or the *Morte d'Arthur*, where Malory often quotes 'the French book'? The French books, not ballads, were his main sources, and he says so himself. Here is another quotation from the reviewer in *The Academy*. The Professor quotes two lines of Præd,

Hic jacet Guilielmus Brown,
Vir nulla non donandus lauru,

which means, of course, 'Here lies William Brown, a man worthy of every laurel.' But the Professor is cited as adding the note 'Hic jacet. Here lies William Brown, a man not presented with any laurel, the epitaph written for himself by the modest Doctor.' If these things be so, we indeed live in an age of 'careless professors.'

* * *

Mr. Taunton's *History of the Jesuits in England* I have not yet read. But I have looked at the portrait of the famous Father Parsons, S.J., in the frontispiece. Now the portrait is that of a thin man, unshaven from ear to chin. Well, lately Dr. Andrew Wilson wrote something on the celebrated phantasm of an ecclesiastic which Dr. Jessopp saw at 1 A.M. in Lord Orford's library. Dr. Wilson suggested that the appearance was a vision based on a portrait of Father Parsons. But the appearance was clean-shaved, and otherwise unlike the portrait of Parsons in Mr. Taunton's book. However, another *Academy* reviewer removes this difficulty by saying that the portrait in Mr. Taunton's book is not that of Parsons, but of a mitred abbot of 1622, twelve years after Parsons's death. So Dr. Jessopp's phantasm may have arisen out of the real portrait of Parsons; certainly it could not have been suggested by the wrong one, if Mr. Taunton's is the wrong one.

* * *

He is a naïf writer on book-collecting who falls into ecstasy over the thought of holding in his hands the *Christabel* of 1816. He can, or lately could, secure that pleasure for a few shillings; I had, or have if they are not lost, two copies, purchased at a rate to suit a moderate purse. Early Keatses have gone up enormously, but there was always a 'slump' in Coleridges. *Christabel* did not make the fortune of Mr. Murray, and, even now, collectors do not seem to care for the very ordinary looking pamphlet. Mr. Matthew Arnold, judging by recent records of sales, seems to be the victim of a 'slump' as regards 'Poems by A.' and *Empedocles on Etna*. Yet I do not repent purchases made of these during a 'boom.' Collins's *Odes* (1746-47) are quoted at thirty-three golden pounds. The original price, one shilling, is on the title-page. My copy cost, apparently, either 3*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* or 3*s.* 6*d.*, so it was a good investment, as it is a very good copy. Addison's *Campaign* is the very seediest pamphlet that ever made a poet's luck, and, oh, what a bad poem it is! But nobody collects it, I fancy; I picked up a copy lately to give away to the right person. After all, the passion for first editions is rather incomprehensible. You seldom find such funny things in them as in an erratum to Tennyson's *Poems* of 1830:

For 'three times three'
Read 'amorously.'

On consulting the line we find that the poet first kissed a lady's fingers 'three times three.' This might lead to the inference that she was a freak and had nine fingers on each hand. So the author wisely substituted 'amorously,' pronounced 'amorouslee.'

* . *

Whether Philip Francis did or did not write the Letters of Junius is a point which interests few persons. Whosoever wrote them was much of a hound. Now the Philip Francis who appears in *The Francis Letters*, edited by Miss Keary,* is not a hound at all, but a very pleasant person, devoted to his children and to cats. When he is severe, as he is about Portugal and the Portuguese, it is with humorous exaggeration. As far as manner and style go, I would as soon suspect the late Mr. James Payn of the Junius Letters as Francis. But, of course, this is no argument: a man writes friendly private letters in one style, and unfriendly public letters in another. One merely sees nothing of

* Hutchinson.

Junius in these private letters of Francis. Mr. Keary, in a preface, argues for Francis as the real Junius. And I do not see any reply to his contention. Nobody known to us fills the necessary requirements nearly so well as Francis. I say it with regret, for the Francis of the new volumes is a very pleasant person. But I do not see why Mr. Keary should say that Francis was an Irishman, as an explanation of part of his conduct—if he was Junius. Irish birth does not indicate any particular sort of character, unless the family of Francis was Celtic, when perhaps it may mean something. Mr. Keary calls Carlyle 'a Scot of a different Celtic family,' but a Dumfriesshire man need not be Celtic. It is an ordinary error to think that all people born north of Tweed are Celts. They need have no more Celtic blood than any Englishman you please. Lately I read some article in which it was taken for granted that a man was a Celt because his name was Douglas. Douglas is a Celtic place-name, adopted by a Lowland family of whose original race nothing is known. As the chiefs were powerful, thousands of their Lowland neighbours adopted the name; it has no evidence to give as to the race of this or that person who bears it. The most amusing letters in the volumes are those of Eliza Johnson, describing the flirtations of girls of fifteen and seventeen, girls who much resemble Lydia and Kitty, in *Pride and Prejudice*. Miss Austen could hardly have drawn them better, and it is a pity that Miss Johnson did not write novels. The date is 1804, and everything is 'famous,' as in Miss Edgeworth's stories.

* * *

Of all people Sir Philip Francis is the last whom one would expect to keep a ghost in his house. Another claimant of the discredit of being Junius, the wicked Lord Lyttelton, is best remembered for the two ghost stories connected with his death. But his nerves were in rags, and sometimes he did not dare to be alone at night. Francis was of harder metal. But he writes to his brother-in-law that his children are bawling and his wife scolding as usual, 'and Paty' (a cousin of his wife) 'raving mad. These, with the addition of a preternatural Appearance, and some unaccountable Noises which have been repeatedly in my house in Duke Street at the dead of night, make up the perpetual History of my family. Without a Jest, I have myself heard a most extraordinary ringing of bells at midnight, and have never been able to discover the cause.' This was in June 1768. If Paty was

'raving mad,' perhaps 'the cause' was not very far to seek. But, alas! Paty was not living in Francis's house, but with Mr. and Mrs. Mackrabie, his father- and mother-in-law. I find no more about the bells or the 'preternatural Appearance,' which Francis 'took very unconcernedly,' as Claverhouse says that the Christian carrier took his execution. The whole book is very interesting, but why is the title-page without date? The omission is an inconvenient practice, and one sees no use in it, unless the idea is that nobody will buy a book except of the actual year, and that a purchaser of 1902 may delude himself into the idea that an undated book of last year is a book of this year. Persons of that degree of stupidity are not likely to buy any book at all, certainly not such a book as the Francis correspondence. The dodge of dating a book in next year is quite old. Collins's *Odes* appeared in December 1746, but are dated 1747. Even in 1747, it appears, the public did not want last year's books. They did not want Collins's book at all, and he burned most of the edition. It is said that when he came into a little money—'to Collins this sum could not seem exhaustible, nor did he live to exhaust it'—he recouped the publishers for the loss of their adventure. But Collins had been insane, and perhaps he always remained eccentric. At least, we ought not to condemn him, in the circumstances.

ANDREW LANG.

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